Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XIX, Issue No. 307 | MONDAY DECEMBER 21, 2009 | www.saipantribune.com | 50¢

POLL RESULTS

Should NMC revisit its policy of allowing the termination of NMC employees without cause?

Yes	106
No	32
Undecided	3
No opinion	7

Sunday, December 20, 2009

INSIDE

Suspect in Cuffs

The main suspect in the Philippines' worst political massacre, wearing a bulletproof vest and handcuffs, was pushed by guards through an angry crowd Friday to appear at a preliminary investigation hearing.

Asia...Page 16

2010 budget talks SCRAPPED

But dissolved committee to offer cost-cutting measures to 17th Legislature

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A joint House and Senate committee that was formed to iron out a budget deadlock met for the first—and last—time on Friday, after five of six members voted to dissolve the panel and leave the passage of the Fiscal Year 2010 budget to the incoming 17th Legislature.

See SCRAPPED on Page 4

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Only Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan), third from left, of the six members of the Conference Committee on the Fiscal Year 2010 budget bill, voted "no" on the dissolution of the panel during its first and only meeting Friday morning on Capital Hill.

CNMI tourism goals hard to reach

MVA makes presentation to businessmen, lawmakers

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority's revised 2006-2010 goal of having 750,000 in visitor arrivals by Fiscal Year 2010—from the original 1 million—seems to be far from being achieved amid tight budget and modest projected growth from major markets. In FY 2009 alone, arriv-

See TOURISM on Page 4

KES tops Christmas in the Marianas caroling contest

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Young carolers from Koblerville Elementary School bested students from four other schools to emerge as this year's champion of the Christmas in the Marianas caroling contest held last Saturday at American Memorial Park.

The event, which is already in its eighth

See KES on Page 4

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Oleai Elementary School won the 2009 Christmas in the Marianas float competition, shortly after the end of the parade from the Garapan Fishing Base to the American Memorial Park on Saturday. Inset shows Oleai Elementary School 2nd grader Esrah Serrano, 7, during the parade.

'Habitual offenders a problem in the CNMI'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Habitual offenders or recidivists are a problem in the CNMI as they are responsible for the rising burglary, robbery, and theft cases, according to the coordinator for the Department of Public Safety's Thief Apprehension

See OFFENDERS on Page 4

Interior backs CNMI submerged lands bill. **PAGE 2**
Detained lawyer Arriola seeks temporary release. **PAGE 3**

Local

CHRISTMAS, FILIPINO-STYLE
Saipan Community Church choir members perform at the "Paskong Pinoy 2009: A Christmas celebration," on the Mount Carmel Cathedral grounds in Susupe on Saturday night. The seventh annual event hosted by the United Filipino Organization also included a lantern contest. This year's sponsors also included IT&E and Tan Siu Lin Foundation.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Interior backs CNMI submerged lands bill

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's submerged lands bill received backing from the U.S. Department of the Interior during Thursday's hearing on H.R. 934 held by the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests.

This came a day after President Obama approved $1.35 million in special projects earmarks requested by Sablan. In the same Fiscal Year 2010 omnibus spending bill, the president also approved a delay in the implementation of the next 50-cent minimum wage increase from May 2010 to Sept. 30, 2010 and every year thereafter, a development welcomed by the Fitial administration and the business sector.

Sablan (D-MP) said his CNMI submerged lands bill took "another step forward."

If signed into law by President Obama, Sablan's H.R. 934 will give the CNMI ownership of up to three miles of its submerged lands. It passed the House on July 15 with a unanimous vote of 416-0.

The bill must still pass the U.S. Senate and be signed by President Obama before it becomes law.

Sablan said the Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands and Forests' hearing on Thursday to take testimony on H.R. 934 "was a necessary next step in

See INTERIOR on Page 4

DPS warns people making shooting rampage threats

The Department of Public Safety has warned that it will arrest people who threaten to kill persons by replicating the man who went on a shooting rampage last month.

DPS spokesperson Eric David said the DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau received a lot of complaints about threatening to commit a shooting rampage just like what Zhong Ren Li did.

DPS received such complaints mostly in domestic violence-related cases.

David said CIB investigators are taking this type of complaints seriously.

"Anyone making such threat can be charged with disturbing the peace," the spokesperson pointed out.

He urged victims receiving such threats to immediately call the police.

Last Dec. 10, police arrested a terminated cook who allegedly pointed a knife at a woman, beat her up inside a store in Garapan, and threatened he would kill her just like what happened in the recent shooting rampage.

Guo Hui Pan, 45, a Chinese national, was arrested for assault with a dangerous weapon, aggravated assault and battery, assault, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace.

Last Nov. 25, Zhong Ren Li, a Chinese national, went on a shooting rampage, killing four persons in Kannat Tabla and injuring one child. He proceeded to Marpi where he shot and injured seven tourists before he ended his life by shooting himself. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Capture the Holidays

MOTOROLA U9
$145.00*
• 2 Megapixel Camera
• Video Recording
• Bluetooth
• MP3/AAC/AAC+/WMA/OGG/AMR Players
• Micro SD Card Slot
Regular Price: $178.00
GSM Postpaid

SAMSUNG S3310
$135.00*
• 2 Megapixel Camera
• Video Recording
• Bluetooth
• MP4/AAC/WMA Players
• Micro SD Card Slot
Regular Price: $190.00
GSM Postpaid

NOKIA 3120C
$125.00*
• 2 Megapixel Camera
• Video Recording
• Bluetooth
• MP3/ACC/MPEG4 Players
• Micro SD Card Slot
• Japan capable roaming
Regular Price: $209
GSM Postpaid

MOTOROLA K1 GOLD
$95.00*
• 2 Megapixel Camera
• Video Recording
• Bluetooth
• MP3/ACC/AAC+ Players
• Micro SD Card Slot
*Exclusive Packaging includes:
• Phone pouch
• Micro SD memory card
• Hands free headset
Regular Price: $259.00
GSM Postpaid

MOTOROLA W510
$85.00*
• 1.3 Megapixel Camera
• Video Recording
• Bluetooth
• Media Player
• Micro SD Card Slot
Regular Price: $147.00
GSM Postpaid

Gift Card $10
Gift Card $20
Gift Card $50

Includes ONE FREE MONTH ACCESS & $20 LD CARD

*New Activations Only with 12-month agreement required. Includes One (1) Month Free Access (Airtime) & One (1) $20.00 Long Distance Phone Card. Valid during December 7th - December 31st or while supplies last. Other conditions to apply.

NTT docomo DOCOMO PACIFIC
483-CARE | www.docomopacific.com | Typhoon-Proven
Gualo Rai, Middle Road • Mita Travel, Garapan

Tis the Season to get new Eyeglasses:
Only $77.00
at Marianas Eye Institute

Just $77.00 for a complete pair of glasses:
- Lens & Frames included
- One-year warranty
- Selected Brands
- Lightweight lenses
- $127.00 for Progressive "no-line" bifocals

Most Insurance Accepted
Walk-ins welcome
235-9090
Beach Road, Garapan
www.MarianasEye.com
Marianas Eye Institute
"Where Technology Meets Talent"

Detained lawyer Arriola seeks temporary release

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Joseph Aldan Arriola, a lawyer who is facing charges of wire fraud and money laundering, has asked the federal court to allow him to post bail.

Arriola, through court-appointed counsel Steven Pixley, requested the U.S. District Court for the NMI to release him to a third party custodian.

Philippine authorities arrested Arriola for being a fugitive in the U.S. on June 16,2009 in the Philippines where he was then detained for five months.

The Philippine government deported the lawyer to Saipan on Nov. 25, 2009. Since then, he has been detained in connection with the federal charges at the Department of Corrections in Susupe.

In court papers, Pixley said in determining to release Arriola the court should focus on two factors: Whether conditions of release will assure the defendant's court appearance, and whether his release will endanger the safety of persons in the community.

Pixley said there is no evidence supporting a finding that it would endanger the safety of persons in the community.

Accordingly, he said, the court should determine whether condition of release will assure the appearance of Arriola as required.

Pixley proposed Joseph Aldan, whom he said is a respected member of the community, to be designated as a third party to ensure Arriola's court appearance.

Pixley said Aldan, a retired government employee, will ensure that the defendant complies with the court's conditions of release.

When first taken to the court last month, the judge imposed no bail for Arriola, but stated that if proper motion for bail modification is filed, the court will review the matter.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Kirk Schuler, on behalf of the U.S. government, opposed bail for Arriola. The prosecutor said the defendant was a fugitive for over a year already.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson set the jury trial for Jan. 25, 2010 at 9am.

The U.S. government charged Arriola and former Rita Kaipat estate administrator Luis Pelisamen with wire fraud and money laundering for stealing $625,575 from the estate's account.

Arriola was the then counsel of Pelisamen. Arriola fled to the Philippines, while Pelisamen was arrested and subsequently found guilty.

In June 2009, a composite team of Philippine law enforcers arrested Arriola in a village in the northern part of the Philippines.

Young burglar gets 3-month jail term

The Superior Court has imposed a jail sentence of three months and one day on a teenager who broke into a barracks and stole a laptop.

Presiding Judge Robert Naraja sentenced Marvin Ringlen to three years in jail, all suspended except three months and one day, for burglary.

Naraja gave the 18-year-old Ringlen credit for the three months and one day that he already served in jail. It means that the defendant is already out in jail.

The defendant, however, is placed on two years and nine months of probation. He is required to pay a $200 fine, $300 probation fee, and $100 court assessment fee.

The judge ordered Ringlen perform 100 hours of community work service.

Naraja also ordered the defendant to pay restitution and write a letter of apology to the victim, Ms. Bai Bing Bing.

The Office of the Attorney General charged Ringlen with burglary and theft. The defendant signed a plea agreement with the government. He pleaded guilty to burglary. The theft charge was dismissed as part of the agreement.

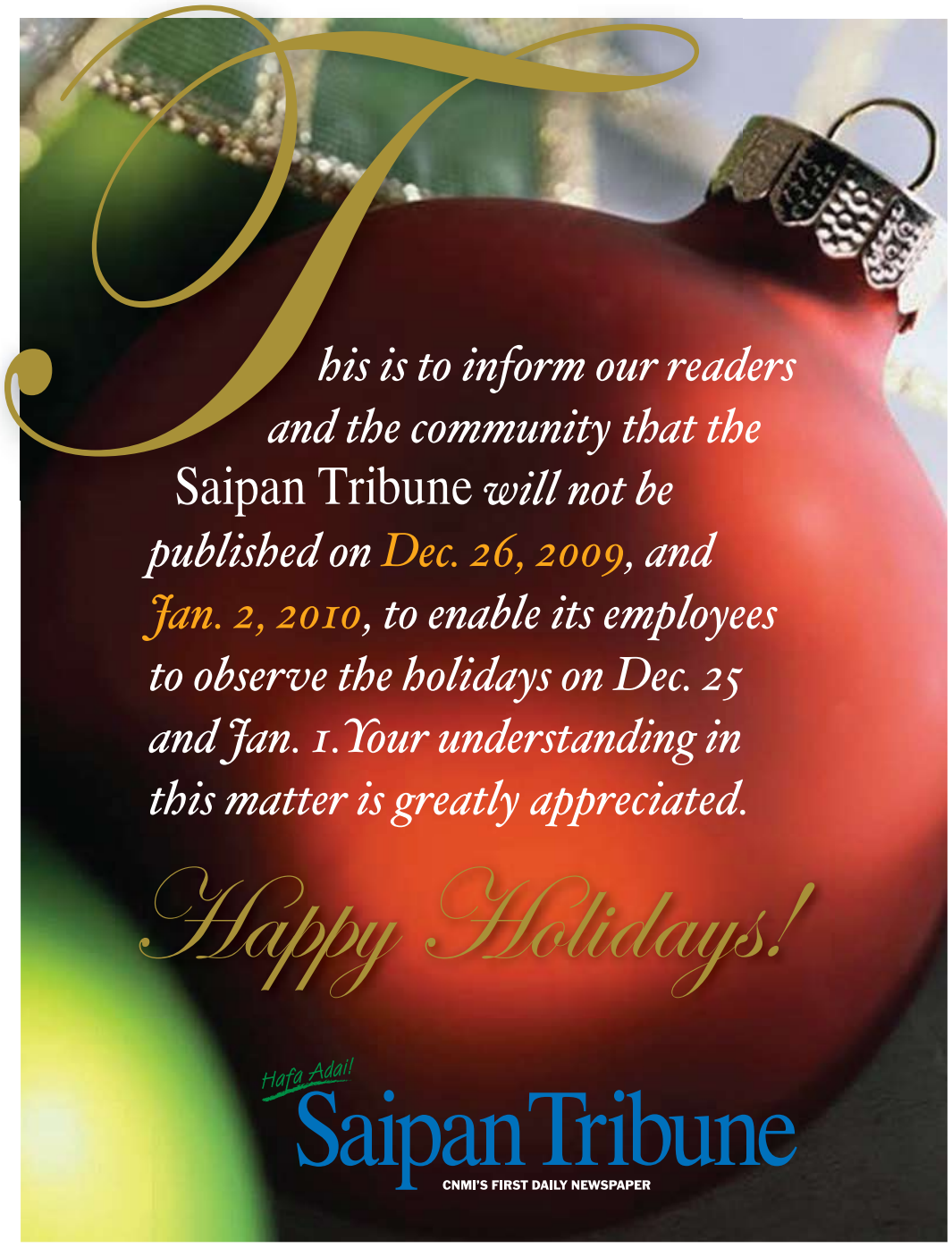
The agreement stated that on Sept. 5, 2009, Ringlen broke into the barracks of Bai in San Antonio with the purpose of theft.

The victim told police officers she was cooking in her barracks when she saw the suspect open the front door of her unit and took her laptop worth $900 on the table.

The victim followed Ringlen, who ran to another barracks near her residence. When she lost sight of the suspect, she called the police.

Police arrested Ringlen that same day, but the computer was not recovered. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

3 Strands
CHRISTIAN OUTLET
NOW OPEN
BOOKS
GIFTS
CD/DVD
CARDS
Looking for appropriate yet
inspiring gifts this Christmas season? Come and check our store!
More stocks are coming in time for Christmas. We have a good
gift selection of mugs, journals, planners, keychains, tshirts
frames, bags, canvas prints, bible covers, greeting cards,
children's books & gifts, DVDs and CDs, water bottles, books
bibles, devotionals, and a lot more.
15% DISCOUNT APPLIES for ALL ITEMS
in the store until December 31, 2009.
CK
3 Strands
ASPERDIDO
MOBIL
HOP WOOD
VS SABLAN
SUBWAY
CONTACT #: 670-285-4438(GIFT)
ADDRESS: DOOR 2 ACE BLDG.
AS PERDIDO ROAD,
CHALAN KANOA, SAIPAN
(NEXT TO TONETTE'S TAILORING
& SUPERSAVER AUTO SUPPLY)
●CASH ONLY PURCHASES●
Christmas Store Hours:
10:30AM - 7:30PM Monday to Saturday. Closed on Sundays
3Strands CHRISTIAN OUTLET
"A CORD OF THREE STRANDS IS NOT EASILY BROKEN"
Ecclesiastes 4:12


This is to inform our readers
and the community that the
Saipan Tribune will not be
published on Dec. 26, 2009, and
Jan. 2, 2010, to enable its employees
to observe the holidays on Dec. 25
and Jan. 1. Your understanding in
this matter is greatly appreciated.
Happy Holidays!
Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Celebrate the Holidays in style
at Palms Resort Saipan
and enjoy a variety of holiday specials.

Christmas Eve Specials
(December 24, 2009)

Pau Pau Bar & Terrace	Indian Dinner Buffet $25.00 adult & $12.50 child Ladies Night at Pau Pau Bar 50% off on selected beverages
Minami Restaurant	Chinese Dinner Buffet $33.00 adult & $16.50 child
Kaenju Restaurant	All You Can Eat Seafood & Steak Teppanyaki Style $44.00 adult & $22.00 child

Christmas Day Specials
(December 25, 2009)

Pau Pau Bar & Terrace	Ladies Night at Pau Pau Bar 50% off on selected beverages
Minami Restaurant	Christmas Day Brunch $35.00 adult & $17.50 child Christmas Dinner Buffet $33.00 adult & $16.50 child
Kaenju Restaurant	All You Can Eat Seafood & Steak Teppanyaki Style $44.00 adult & $22.00 child

20% Local Discount
San Roque Club Welcome

The Palms on PauPau Beach

For more information or reservation, please see call 322-3311.

OFFENDERS

From Page 1

Select Coalition.

TASC coordinator Sgt. James C. Deleon Guerrero said he believes that 40 percent to the burglary and theft incidents in the Commonwealth has been committed by these repeat offenders.

"It's an absolute disgrace," said Deleon Guerrero, referring to these habitual offenders. "We have a lot of burglars."

The police official noted that adults are even using juveniles in committing these crimes.

DPS commissioner Santiago F. Tudela recently ordered the reorganization of TASC to curb the surge in burglary, robbery, and theft incidents.

TASC is a special group formed by DPS in 2002 that focused on solving burglary, theft, and robbery cases.

During a press conference on Thursday, Deleon Guerrero said they do acknowledge recidivism as a problem in the Commonwealth.

The TASC coordinator said to effectively address the problem of recidivism there should be a mandatory jail term for these offenders and there should an increase of penalties or fees.

Deleon Guerrero said the vehicles used during the commission of burglary, theft, and robbery should also be seized and forfeited by the government.

He said lawmakers need to step into the process to introduce legislations as the CNMI's criminal statute is already old.

INTERIOR

From Page 2

the legislative process leading to the bill becoming law."

"The bill conveys to the people of the Northern Mariana Islands the submerged lands surrounding our islands and extending three miles outward from the coastline. At this (last) week's hearing, the U.S. Department of Interior testified in favor of transferring the submerged lands to the CNMI," said Sablan in his latest e-newsletter.

He also said that Interior recommended language clarifying how the transfer would interact with management of the presidential proclamation creating the Marianas Trench National Monument, which the Subcommittee will take under consideration.

"It has always been my intent to preserve the terms and conditions of the Proclamation as they were negotiated between the CNMI government and the Bush administration, while at the same time gaining control of the submerged lands for the people of the Northern Mariana Islands," Sablan said.

TOURISM

From Page 1

als reached only 375,808, MVA data shows.

Adding to the toxic mix is the uncertainty of continued access to Chinese and Russian markets because their U.S. visa-free entry into the CNMI rests solely on Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano's parole authority.

The suspension of chartered flights from China alone from the date of federalization on Nov. 28 to early last week, due to diplomatic and immigration woes, was projected to result in some $2.6 million in revenue loss to the CNMI for every week the flights are suspended.

Cuts in at least 20 off-shore and on-island promotions are also anticipated in FY 2010, which started on Oct. 1, but MVA is working to avoid such cuts and fund its operations amid only $6.6 million in budget.

MVA wants to be "funded appropriately and ensure timely allotment remittance." It also wants a reinstatement of the Commonwealth Ports Authority's airline incentives.

The CNMI's tourism agency also wants to use the Managaha landing fee for promotions and advertisement.

Tourism is now the sole economic driver for the CNMI after the demise early this year of the once almighty garment industry which manufacturers global brands such as Calvin Klein, Tommy Hilfiger, Jones New York, Gap, Old Navy, JC Penney, American Eagle, and Abercrombie & Fitch.

These were among the issues discussed by MVA during a meeting with some 30 businessmen and lawmakers on Friday morning at the Pacific Islands Club in San Antonio.

MVA managing director Perry Tenorio made a slide presentation titled, "The Northern Marianas Tourism Economy: Past, Present and Beyond," a copy of which was obtained by *Saipan Tribune* after the media was thrown out of the meeting.

According to some of those who attended the MVA presentation, the meeting did not "seem to merit being held in private if MVA insists that tourism is everybody's business."

Based on the MVA presentation, visitors arrivals to the CNMI peaked at 726,690 in 1997 but have since declined in the succeeding years due to the Asian economic crisis, the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, the Afghan war, the Japan Airlines pullout from the CNMI in October 2005, and the H1N1 flu scare this year.

Arrivals totaled 375,808 in FY 2009, which ended on Sept. 30, 2009.

MVA's "ideal scenario" is to have 445,084 tourists a year, which is projected to result in over $350 million in direct impact and over $1.148 billion in indirect economic impact.

MVA's 2006-2010 strategic tourism initiatives plan had an original goal of 1 million visitors by 2010. MVA later revised this goal to 750,000.

The agency estimates 273,160 seats from its main market of Japan in FY 2010. Based on an 80 percent load factor, it estimates 218,528 in visitor arrivals or a 3.8 percent growth.

MVA also estimates 151,218 air seats from its second major market of Korea in FY 2010. Based on an 80 percent load factor, this is estimated to result in 120,974 visitors, a 30 percent growth.

Promotion cuts

MVA is anticipating in FY 2010 promotion cuts in off-shore programs, including the JATA Trade Fair, the Japan Golf Fair, the Active Senior Campaign, the Dive Campaign, the Golf Campaign, the Group Incentive Campaign, sports marketing, office ladies market, and honeymoon season promotion.

It also anticipates promotion cuts in on-island activities, including the Tagaman and XTERRA, site security guards, the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival, the Tinian Turquoise Blue Triathlon, and the Rota Blue Triathlon.

MVA's support to other programs is also on the verge of cuts, including support to the Beautify CNMI, the MTEC, the Flame Tree Arts Festival, and the San Francisco de Borja fiesta.

KES

From Page 1

year, drew hundreds of spectators and aside from the caroling competition, the three-hour Christmas in the Marianas also had a float competition.

KES garnered 94 points to best Dandan Elementary School, which got 87 points, in the caroling contest.

Third prize went to San Vicente Elementary with its 84 points, while defending champion Oleai Elementary School came in fourth. Fifth place went to Kagman Elementary School.

KES principal Rizzalina Purugganan, who led the 46-student caroling group, said this was the first time her school bagged the championship after finishing second the previous two years.

"We're very happy and very satisfied with the outcome," she said moments after they received the cash prize from event organizers.

She said the prize money will be used in rewarding the students as well as in the procurement of classroom materials for their learning.

Purugganan said it took a lot of hard work and sacrifice from students in preparing their performance. She said teachers and students, which were made up of kindergarten to sixth grade students, poured in extra time during their weekend rehearsals.

KES participated in the caroling contest the past two years and Parugganan vowed to continue their involvement in the future.

The winning group wowed the crowd with their outstanding performance, as the students sang Christmas carols in a variety of languages, complemented with synchronized dance steps, and colorful Christmas costumes.

The principal expressed her appreciation to Marianas Visitors Authority and its sponsors for holding the event. The competition, she added, is important in enhancing and developing the students' talents, skills, and self-esteem.

KES fourth grader Leonard Manuel, one of the best carolers in the group, said it feels great when efforts are recognized and acknowledged.

Sixth grader Jefren Maralit and fifth grader Nieves Babauta, meantime, admitted that the event develops the students' creativity and camaraderie.

In the float competition, Oleai Elementary School was adjudged overall champion besting other schools' entries.

Judges were impressed by the creativity and resourcefulness of the school after it used all natural and recycled materials. OES' entry garnered 57 points, topping the list in originality, relevance to the theme, decoration, and costume.

Recipients of the second and third place honors in the float contest were Kagman Elementary and Koblerville Elementary, respectively. Agape Christian School was awarded the fourth best entry in the competition.

A $25 cash prize was also awarded to each students who displayed the best Christmas costume for the occasion.

Organized by MVA, the traditional competition brings awareness and helps promote the island's indigenous culture to tourist and spectators.

SCRAPPED

From Page 1

Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), who was present at the meeting, said it is "irresponsible" for the Joint Conference Committee on the FY 2010 budget bill to "abandon" the budget in the face of a "fiscal crisis of this magnitude."

"I strongly disagree with the motion to dissolve the committee. Given what we know about the CNMI's fiscal state like the $12 million in projected over-expenditure, it is irresponsible for the 16th Legislature to not even try," Sablan told members of the conference committee.

Only Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan) voted "no" on the motion offered by Rep. David Apatang (R-Saipan) to dissolve the Joint Conference Committee on the FY 2010 budget bill.

The five other lawmakers who voted "yes" on the dissolution of the panel included Apatang, Rep. Victor Hocog (Ind-Rota), Rep. Oscar M. Babauta (Cov-Saipan), Sen. Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota), and Sen. Maria "Frica" Pangelinan (D-Saipan).

Apatang said the House is not likely to pass the FY 2010 budget because of disagreement with the Senate's proposed austerity measures that include a 16-hour cut in work hours per pay period.

"We should dissolve the committee and let the next Legislature deal with it. The budget we passed in the House is already obsolete because we haven't received updated information from the administration… Let's give the next Legislature an opportunity to sit down with the administration on the most current figures," Apatang told his colleagues.

Hocog said even if the conference committee agreed on the austerity measures on Friday, there won't be enough time for the House members to review the revised budget bill and agreed with Apatang that there won't be enough votes to pass it.

Senate legal counsel Tony Cabrera, when asked by the conference committee, said any appropriations bill require the approval of three-fourths of the members of the Senate and House of Representatives.

$11.5 million projected over-expenditure

The House budget bill identified budgetary resources of $162.820 million, which the Senate agreed on, but they are deadlocked on how to address a projected deficit of $15.3 million in FY 2010.

However, during Friday's meeting of the committee, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's special assistant for administration Esther Fleming said in the first quarter of FY 2010 alone—from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31, 2009—the projected over-expenditure is already pegged at $11.5 million.

Fleming said the over-expenditure is mostly due to Commonwealth Health Center expenses on hemodialysis and medical referral, as well as Commonwealth Utilities Corp. costs.

She told the committee that the projected over-expenditure is $12 million, but later told *Saipan Tribune* that she just rounded off $11.5 million. "It's closer to $11.5 million than $12 million," she added.

"We may bring the resources further down but we're not prepared yet to provide the figures," Fleming told the conference committee.

Cost-cutting measures

Manglona, who is the incoming president of the 17th Senate, said during the meeting that even if the committee would be dissolved, it can at least recommend cost-cutting measures for the 17th Legislature to consider, including not giving holiday pays after Jan. 1, 2010, and austerity Fridays.

"Even if we don't agree on the budget, at least we could agree on other things that are not necessarily about numbers," said Manglona, referring to proposed austerity measures.

Yumul agreed that the committee could come up with a set of cost-cutting recommendations for the incoming Legislature's consideration.

Babauta, for his part, said the Legislature should allow for a reprogramming authority so that the government can continue to provide basic services given limited resources.

At this point, Apatang reiterated his motion to dissolve the conference committee.

Yumul asked members of the public for comments before voting on the motion.

It was at this point that Sablan made her objections to the dissolution of the committee known.

During the meeting, Sablan recommended a list of cost-cutting measures that include a government-wide desk audit, terminating government vehicle leases for elected officials, cutting the number of special assistants and other non-essential positions, shutting down duplicative or non-essential offices and programs, reducing the operational budget of lawmakers, and making board and commission membership voluntary or without pay.

Sablan also recommended terminating non-essential professional services contract, including the contract with the Washington, D.C.-based Jenner & Block which represents the CNMI in its federalization lawsuit against the federal government, setting aside poker revenues for operational expenses instead of giving them to local delegation for "pet projects," and reduction in force.

She said Fleming's statement that the bulk of projected over-expenditure is due to medical referrals and hemodialysis should be reason enough for the Fitial administration and CHC to prioritize outsourcing billings and collections at CHC, which has over $118 million in receivables.

Rep. Ed Salas (R-Saipan), who was also present at the meeting, echoed Sablan's recommendations.

Babauta suggested that the Legislature should no longer pass unfunded mandates.

Sablan agreed with Babauta, saying that the House should therefore recall House Bill 16-68, SD1 or the unfunded mandate to increase retirement benefits that the House approved and sent to Fitial during the last session.

Because of a lack of a timely passed FY 2010 budget, the government has been operating under a continuing budget resolution since Oct. 1, 2009.

Investigator/s appointed for detective facing extortion charges

The federal court has granted the request of Christopher Leon Guerrero, a police detective who is facing extortion charges, to appoint an investigator or investigators in order to ensure effective preparation for his defense.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson ordered that Leon Guerrero may hire one or more investigators and experts, and incur expenses up to $500 for each person so hired.

Munson said the expenses should not exceed a total of $1,500 for all such persons hired.

"Should the defendant find he needs to exceed this sum, he may move the court for an increased amount," said the judge in a written order.

Leon Guerrero, through his counsel, stated in his motion that such services of an investigator is necessary for an adequate defense.

The detective said he is financially unable to obtain such services.

The defendant said he needs an investigator to search local police records and question witnesses about the allegedly seized vehicles and alleged pending criminal charges.

Leon Guerrero had pleaded not guilty to the allegations he was engaged in an extortion racket.

The indictment charged him with one count of extortion under color of official right.

According to the indictment, in September 2009 Leon Guerrero committed extortion by using his position as a police officer to obtain money from the driver of an illegal taxicab in exchange for dismissing the driver's criminal case.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation arrested Leon Guerrero last Nov. 16 after the U.S. government filed a complaint charging him with interference with commerce by threats or violence/Hobbs Act extortion under color of official right.

According to FBI special agent Haejun Park, Leon Guerrero used his official position at the Department of Public Safety to demand and receive payments ranging from $300 to $700 from drivers of illegal taxicabs in exchange for dismissing their criminal case and returning to the drivers the seized vehicles. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

MAN'AMKO SERENADE

The Commonwealth Health Center got a welcome treat last Dec. 16 as members of the *man'amko* serenaded them. In photo are guitarist James Pangelinan, the rest of the *man'amko*, as well as two employees from the Aging Center.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Humanities Council to host book discussion program

The NMI Council for the Humanities invites to public to attend a four-week book discussion program that will explore four classic American novels. The program, which runs from Jan. 18 to Feb. 12, 2010, will be facilitated by Dr. P.F. Kluge, writer-in residence at Kenyon College in Ohio.

Books to be discussed during the program include *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *Old Man and the Sea*, *Huckleberry Finn*, and *The Things They Carried*. One novel will be considered each week during three 90-minute sessions.

Individuals interested in attending this book discussion program are invited to contact council staff at 235-4785 to reserve a seat. The program is limited to 100 participants who will be registered on a first come, first served basis. The venue and specific dates and times for sessions will be announced shortly. ***(PR)***

2 convenient locations to better serve you!
HARDT EYE CLINIC
Beach Road Clinic
next to Megabyte, Beach Road, Garapan
235-2030
HARDT EYE CLINIC
Kagman Clinic
Kagman III, next to Kagman Postal and Kevin's Video
256-2020
HARDT EYE CLINIC
DAVID HARDT, O.D. | DON HARDT, O.D.
Using advanced technology combined with old-fashioned caring to provide unhurried and understandable exams.
Insurance plans and all major credit cards are gladly accepted

Triple J Motors
Holiday
Service Specials
BUMPER-TO-BUMPER
Maintenance Service
• Oil Change using Castrol GTX, including new oil filter
• Inspect & clean brake system, steering & suspension
• Inspect and rotate tires
• Inspect fuel tank, lines, hoses and connections, plus add Johnson's Fuel-Injector Cleaner
• Inspect front and rear axle boots and joints
• Adjust belts
• Inspect emission control
• Clean air filter
• Test battery & clean terminals - Change if necessary
• Check underbody for damage, rust or corrosion
• Perform minor chasis lubrication and topping of low fluids
Starting at
$89.95*
Castrol
*4 cylinder vehicles only. 6+ cylinder vehicles & above starting at &99.95. Disposal fee not included and some restrictions apply. Service recommended every 6 months or 6,000 miles. Keep your brakes and engine oil clean! Offer good for a limited time only.
Plus, receive a FREE
Car-Freshener
Little Trees
Little Trees Car Air Freshener
and
Turtle Wax 10.4oz. F21 Super Protectant
DO YOU HAVE A SERVICE EDGE, WARRANTECH or REPAIR MASTER EXTENDED SERVICE WARRANTY?
FREE Diagnosis*
ServiceEdge
Extended Vehicle Protection
WARRANTECH
RepairMaster
Come to Triple J Motors for a FREE Mechanical Diagnosis with your extended warranty booklet.*
*Diagnosis for current, non-expired Service Edge, Warrantech or Repair Master contract holders only.
DO YOU DRIVE AN OLDER CAR?
Select Auto Parts Liquidation*
HYUNDAI Sonata • Elantra • Accent • Santa Fe
MITSUBISHI Mirage • Lancer • Montero
MAZDA Protegé • MPV • Millenia
SUZUKI Grand Vitara • Sidekick
ISUZU Trooper • Rodeo • Pick-up Trucks
BUY AT COST!
EVERYTHING PRICED TO MOVE!
*Select automotive parts only. Call or visit for details.
www.carssaipan.com
Customers First
TRIPLE J MOTORS PARTS & SERVICE
Located on Beach Road, Chalan Lau Lau
Open Mon-Fri: 7:30am to 5:30pm • Sat: 7:30am to 5:00pm
Tel: 234-7133/3051 ext 25/27 • Fax: 234-3052
Email:
serviceadvisor@triplejsaipan.com
rsteele@triplejsaipan.com

TONY ROMA'S
RIBS • SEAFOOD • STEAKS
Holiday Special
Cup of Soup of the Day
Cup Chef's Salad
Kickin' Shrimp and St. Louis Ribs Combo with Pilaf and Green Beans
Chocolate Brownie Sundae
$26.99 per set
with complimentary bottle of Carlsberg
Free Wi-Fi Available
From December 1, 2009 to January 3, 2010
1st floor, Comete Center, Garapan • Tel. 233-9193 or 233-9195 • Open from 11:00 am to 10:30 pm

Tourist organizations participate in cleanup effort

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Over 100 tourism industry representatives and volunteers arrived at sunrise on Dec. 14, 2009, to help clean the beaches and streets of downtown Garapan before the holiday surge of visitors.

More than 100 members from the Japan-Saipan Travel Association, the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands, Northern Marianas Dive Operators Association, the Japanese Society of the NMI, and the Marianas Visitors Authority picked up trash along the beach and throughout Garapan on Dec. 14, 2009.

This is the fifth year that the groups have collaborated in this annual event to beautify the tourist areas of Saipan in preparation for visitors during the holiday season. Community members volunteered to be part of the effort, as well. The cleanup covered portions of the main tourist district of Garapan and along Beach Road.

The MVA has collaborated with JSTA on several of JSTA's cleanup efforts.

"Efforts such as these by JSTA, NMDOA, HANMI, and others show commitment and continued support for the visitor industry here in the Marianas," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "We welcome increased community involvement in our visitor industry, considering the visitor's satisfaction depends on their positive experiences here."

MVA said it looks forward to future activities with JSTA, HANMI, NMDOA, and the community to keep the islands attractive for residents and visitors alike. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Tourism industry representatives show off some of the bags of trash collected during the annual pre-holiday cleanup done in conjunction with other tourist groups. The cleanup was completed last Dec. 14 Garapan and along Beach Road.

NMC hosts free information session

Those interested in furthering their education and advancing their professional careers are encouraged to attend the Northern Marianas College's free information session on Dec. 28, at Room D-1 at the college's As Terlaje campus, from 5:30pm to 7pm.

Faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs, as well as counseling, financial aid, and admissions staff will be on hand to answer questions. Other current students will also be speaking about their experiences at NMC.

Individuals who attend the free information session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees WAIVED for the Spring and Summer 2010 semesters. This represents a savings of about $75 for either semester. Participants will also receive personal assistance in filling up application forms and financial aid documents.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in elementary education, associate degrees in business, liberal arts, nursing, natural resource management, criminal justice, hospitality management, and more. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

The free information session is open to everyone, including graduating seniors and their parents, government and private sector employees, international students, and members of the general public who are interested in learning more about the programs at NMC. ***(NMC)***

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Happy 5th birthday to our wonderful son, Terence Antwon Camacho Agulto. You are our pride and joy. We love you and many more birthdays to come. Greetings from your Mommy Brandy, Daddy Jessie, and Grandma and Grandpa Camacho.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CHRISTMAS SALE!!!
DEC. 5, 2009 -JAN. 5, 2010
TOYS - 50%
CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR DECORATIONS - 25%
CARPETS - 15%
BEDROOM APPAREL - 20%
GARDEN TOOLS / ITEMS - 15%
CURTAINS & MATERIALS - 15%
KITCHENWARE - 20%
GIFT ITEMS - 25%
FURNITURES - 15%
KEVIN'S CORPORATION
dba Kevin's Department Store / Wholesale and Retail Store
PO Box 502592 CK Saipan, MP 96950 (Beside the Post Office)
Tel.: (670) 234-8866

Mayor-elect Flores vows to tackle stray dog problem

Saipan Mayor-elect Donald P. Flores said tackling the problem of stray dogs on Saipan will be his first priority after assuming office.

Flores

"Getting this statutory responsibility off the ground and operating has reached a critical stage," Flores said. "It is no longer just a problem; it is now acute and perilous."

The mayor-elect said that adequate appropriation for the stray dog program is an important component in jump starting the program.

"I will not sit back and wait for full funding to start the program. Our Commonwealth is strapped for money, so I must find other ways and resources to supplement whatever funding is available, and prevent the stray dog program from straying again," Flores added.

He said partnering with non-profit groups and animal welfare advocates such as PAWS is crucial in making the program work.

Flores added that help from the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands, Marianas Visitors Authority, Department of Public Health, Department of Public Safety, and others is also critical in solving the island's stray dog problem.

"Even private individuals who believe in animal welfare can also help," he said.

Construction of a functional kennel, according to the mayor-elect, can successfully be completed in less than six months and the operation can begin immediately.

"My plan is to start a program that returns stray dogs to families who would care and be responsible pet owners, make the stray dog program self-sustaining, requiring little to no support from appropriation for its long term operation," said Flores.

Saipan Local No. 9-12 authorizes the Mayors of Saipan and the Northern Islands "to regulate the licensing, control, and disposal of stray dogs."

The act is cited as the "Saipan and Northern Islands Dog Control Act." ***(PR)***

Ristorante Italiano
CAPRICCIOSA
Mahi Mahi Escabeche
Corn Soup
Garlic Bread
Spaghetti Pepperoncino with Shrimp and Cucumber
Smoked Tri-Tip Steak with Sauteed Vegetable
Homemade Pumpkin Pie
$45.99 per set
with complimentary two bottles of Carlsberg
Holiday Special
From December 1, 2009 to January 3, 2010
Homemade Pumpkin Pie Special Offer!
"Buy 3 Whole Pies, Get 1 Free!!" $77.97 (50% discount value. $3.25/slice!)
1 whole pumpkin pie only $25.99 (30% discount value) ✯ 1 slice pumpkin pie only $4.99 (20% discount value)
Offer valid until January 3, 2010
Free Wi-Fi Available
Opens at 11:00 am - 10:30 pm Comete Center 1F, Garapan, next to Tony Roma's • Tel.: 233-9194 or 233-9196

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR
EVENT CALENDAR
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2009
RARAINA CHRISTMAS EVE - CANDLE LIGHT DINNER
6:30PM - 10:00PM
COURSE A: $60.00 - COURSE B: $40.00
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 2009
COSTA TERRACE - EGGNOGG BRUNCH
11:00AM - 2:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
COSTA TERRACE - SEAFOOD NIGHT BUFFET
6:30PM - 10:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 27, 2009
COSTA TERRACE - SUNDAY BRUNCH
11:00AM - 2:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 2009
POOLSIDE NEW YEAR'S EVE - GALA DINNER BUFFET
6:30PM - 9:30PM
ADULT $60.00 • CHILD $30.00
RARAINA NEW YEAR'S EVE - GALA DINNER
6:30PM - 10:00PM
ADULT $80.00 • CHILD $40.00
POOLSIDE - COUNTDOWN PARTY
10:00PM - 1:00AM
$10.00
FRIDAY, JANUARY 1, 2010
COSTA TERRACE NEW YEAR - HUNGOVER BRUNCH
11:00PM - 2:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
COSTA TERRACE - SEAFOOD NIGHT BUFFET
6:30PM - 10:00PM
ADULT $25.00 • CHILD $12.50
20% DISCOUNT FOR ALL LOCAL RESIDENTS
(EXCEPT DECEMBER 31ST - POOLSIDE COUNTDOWN PARTY)
APC
AQUA RESORT CLUB
Saipan

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS

The Department of the Navy (DoN) and the Joint Guam Program Office (JGPO) will host public hearings on the islands of Guam, Tinian, and Saipan to receive oral and written comments on the Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) military relocation Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS). The Draft EIS/OEIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with relocating Marines from Okinawa, Japan to Guam, constructing visiting Aircraft Carrier berthing facilities, and establishing a U.S. Army Air and Missile Defense Task Force on Guam. The Draft EIS/OEIS also examines off base mission critical, mission support, and community support infrastructure improvements needed to ensure that Joint Region Marianas can provide expanded direct support of the DoD strategic mission and operational readiness in the Western Pacific Region. The public hearings will be conducted in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act.

The public is encouraged to attend the public hearings, which will be held at the following dates, times, and locations:

Thursday January 7, 2010- Southern High School, Santa Rita, Guam, 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Saturday January 9, 2010- Field House, University of Guam, Mangilao, Guam, 1:00 pm-3:00 pm
(Open House) 3:00 pm-5:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Monday January 11, 2010- Yigo Gymnasium, Yigo, Guam, 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm-9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Tuesday January 12, 2010- Okkodo High School, Dededo, Guam, 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Thursday January 14, 2010- Tinian Elementary School, San Jose, Tinian 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

Friday January 15, 2010- Multi Purpose Center, Susupe, Saipan 5:00 pm-7:00 pm (Open House)
7:00 pm- 9:00 pm (Formal Hearing)

An open house will take place during the first two hours of each hearing, followed by a two-hour formal public hearing. Informational posters will be displayed and subject matter experts will be available during the open house to discuss the findings of the Draft EIS/OEIS and to answer questions from the public. The formal portion of the hearing will include a presentation followed by a request for comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS. Chamorro translators will be available at all hearings, and Carolinian translators will be available at the Tinian and Saipan hearings.

Oral and/or written comments may be submitted at the public hearings. Oral comments will be limited to three minutes. After three minutes, speakers will be allowed to continue off-stage with a typist. Interested agencies, individuals, and groups unable to attend the public hearings are encouraged to provide written comments postmarked no later than February 17, 2010.

Mail comments to: JGPO c/o NAVFAC Pacific
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Pearl Harbor, Hawaii 96860-3134
Attention: GPMO

A web-based comment form can also be submitted at www.guambuildupeis.us.

The Draft EIS/OEIS is available for review at www.guambuildupeis.us and at the following libraries: University of Guam Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Library, Government Documents Tan Siu Lin Building, UOG Station, Mangilao, GU 96923; Nieves M. Flores Memorial Library, 254 Martyr Street, Hagåtña, GU 96910; Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, P.O. Box 501092, Saipan, MP 96950; Northern Marianas College Olympio T. Borja Memorial Library, P.O. Box 501250, Saipan, MP 96950; and the Tinian Public Library, P.O. Box 520704, Tinian, MP 96952. In addition, a reading room with copies of the Draft EIS/OEIS for the public to review has been established at Agana Shopping Center. This facility will be open during normal shopping center hours starting from November 21, 2009 to February 17, 2010 so that members of the public can access and review the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Federal agencies, government of Guam agencies, government of CNMI agencies, the public, and other interested parties are encouraged to provide oral and/or written comments for consideration in the Final EIS/OEIS. JGPO will consider all comments received as they develop the Final EIS/OEIS.

Bordallo disappointed with delay in final decision on Futenma base

Government of Japan to continue funding realignment

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Guam Delegate Madeleine Z. Bordallo has expressed disappointment with the decision of Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama's administration to delay a final decision on the Futenma Replacement Facility until May 2010.

"I am disappointed by Prime Minister Hatoyama's delay in making a final decision about adhering to the agreed upon implementation plan which includes the development of a replacement facility for Marine aviation at Futenma airfield," said Bordallo.

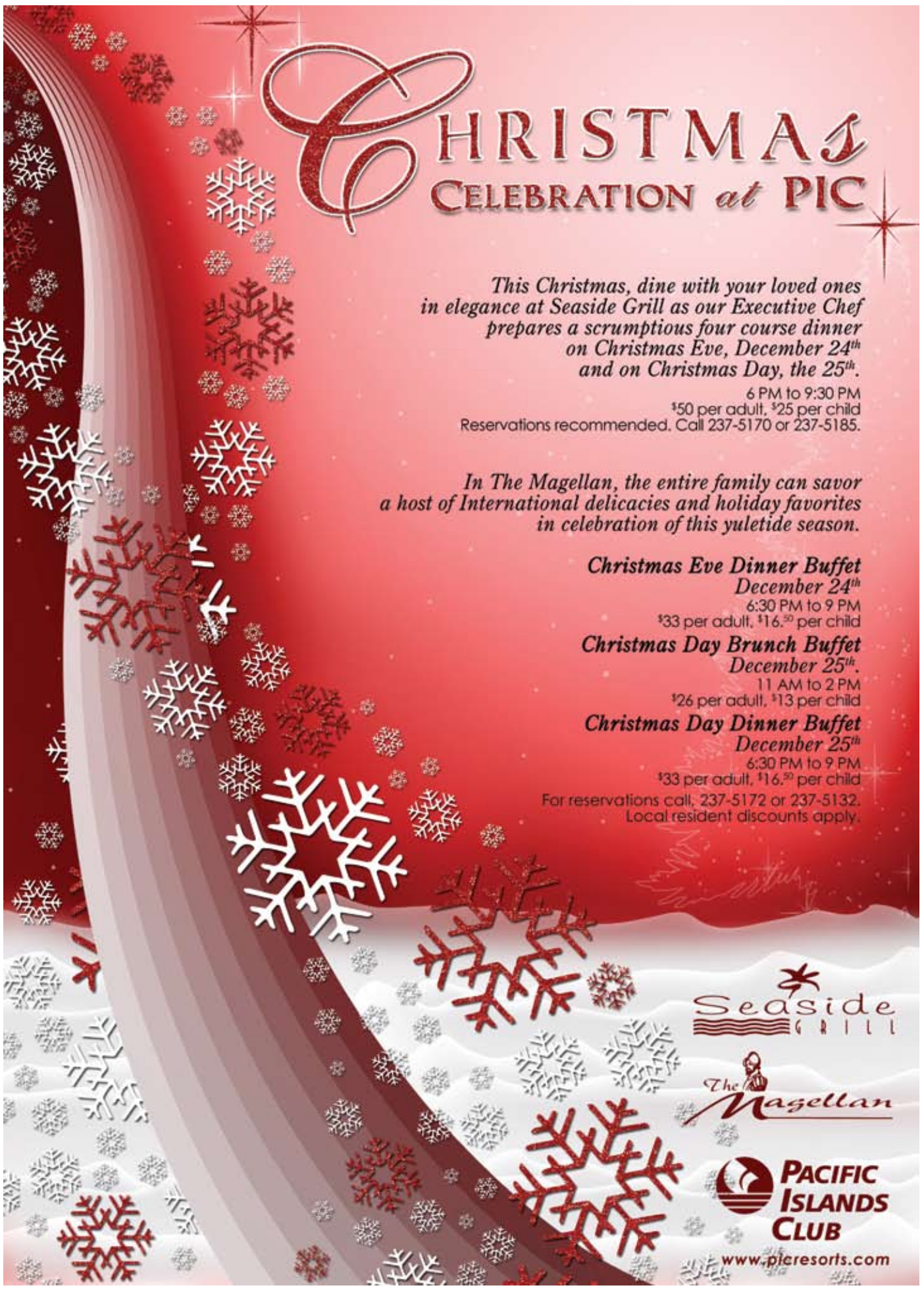
"Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and then-Foreign Minister Hirofumi Nakasone signed the so-called Guam International Agreement in February of this year which codified the implementation plan for realignment of military forces in Japan to include the transfer of Marines from Okinawa to Guam.

Bordallo

"This agreement was reached after lengthy discussions and negotiations. There are difficult decisions that were reached in the agreement but they are the best options available that allow our alliance to remain strong. I believe that with additional time, Prime Minister Hatoyama's Administration will come to the same conclusion as the Obama Administration and previous governments in Japan that this is the best deal.

"However, it was important to see a commitment from the Government of Japan to provide funding for the new airfield as well as the realignment of Marines from Okinawa to Japan. This fiscal commitment in the forthcoming Government of Japan Fiscal Year 2010 budget is important to continuing the U.S. Government's commitment to the implementation plan.

"I firmly believe that moving forward with the implementation plan is critical to ensuring that of both our nations are postured to effectively respond to current and emerging threats in the Asia-Pacific region," she said. ***(PR)***


CHRISTMAS
CELEBRATION at PIC
This Christmas, dine with your loved ones in elegance at Seaside Grill as our Executive Chef prepares a scrumptious four course dinner on Christmas Eve, December 24th and on Christmas Day, the 25th.
6 PM to 9:30 PM
$50 per adult, $25 per child
Reservations recommended. Call 237-5170 or 237-5185.
In The Magellan, the entire family can savor a host of International delicacies and holiday favorites in celebration of this yuletide season.
Christmas Eve Dinner Buffet
December 24th
6:30 PM to 9 PM
$33 per adult, $16.50 per child
Christmas Day Brunch Buffet
December 25th.
11 AM to 2 PM
$26 per adult, $13 per child
Christmas Day Dinner Buffet
December 25th
6:30 PM to 9 PM
$33 per adult, $16.50 per child
For reservations call, 237-5172 or 237-5132.
Local resident discounts apply.
Seaside Grill
The Magellan
Pacific Islands Club
www.picresorts.com

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 21, 1998

CPA favors hiked fees

The Commonwealth Ports Authority will be forced to seek subsidy from the government if it will not raise its airport and seaport fees so that it can repay the $53 million bonds, said Carlos H. Salas, executive director. "Unfortunately, this alternative is highly unlikely since as we all know, the government is also grappling with its own financial problems," said Salas. Proceeds of the bond flotation were used to pay its obligations to finance the necessary capital improvements both at the airports and seaports. Due to the continuous decline in revenue as a result of Asia's financial crisis, it is unavoidable for the ports authority to increase its fees, according to an analysis made by two financial studies on the airport and the seaport.

Governor hits deadend on Kara

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio said Friday it would be impossible to resubmit the name of acting Attorney General Maya Kara to the controversial post after the Senate has adopted a report rejecting action on her future renomination. The six-page report is the latest in a series of attacks the nine-member body has unleashed against Kara to convince the governor to abandon plans of seeking anew the approval of the Senate, which had twice bypassed the acting AG's nomination in the past. "How can I renominate her? The Senate has said they would not confirm her," Tenorio said in an interview. According to the governor, he met with Kara Thursday after the Senate approved the report, which also sought her ouster as acting chief government lawyer. However, Tenorio refused to give details on what transpired during the meeting.

Dec. 21, 1999

Senate backs lawsuit vs US

The Senate will press a lawsuit against the U.S. military to demand compensation for victims of the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) contamination in Tanapag as well as immediate cleanup of the area believed to still have high concentration of the toxic materials. A joint resolution asking the Tenorio administration to pursue the legal avenue is expected to be initiated by the upper house when senators hold a session scheduled for tomorrow on Rota. Senate Floor Leader Pete P. Reyes will sponsor the legislative measure which he said will seek "forceful actions" from the CNMI to deal with growing concerns on the PCB contamination on the island.

902 members meet to deal with new takeover bid

Lt. Gov. Jesus R. Sablan yesterday met members of the CNMI's 902 team to discuss its response to the latest federal takeover proposal offered by Edward B. Cohen, President Clinton's special representative to the consultation talks provided under the Covenant. House Speaker Diego T. Benavente, Senate President Paul A. Manglona and incoming Saipan Chamber of Commerce President Lynn Knight, among others, attended the meeting called by Mr. Sablan, who heads the local panel, immediately after his arrival from Hawaii. A source said the group is expected to come up with a letter addressed to Mr. Clinton criticizing the proposal to strip CNMI authority over local immigration, minimum wage and custom standards.

Dec. 21, 2000

Pete A. for OIA post

A local lawmaker will appeal to President-elect George W. Bush to appoint former Lt. Gov. Pete A. Tenorio to the Office of Insular Affairs in a move to enhance relations between the federal government and the territories, including the CNMI. Sen. Edward U. Maratita said he is ready to recommend highly-credible individuals from the Northern Marianas to replace current OIA Director Ferdinand Aranza, who is from Guam. He will send a letter to Mr. Bush to ask him to consider Mr. Tenorio, former government consultant Brenda Y. Tenorio, and other former members of the 902 panel from the Commonwealth before the incoming U.S. president names his OIA officials.

SC bars Jorgensen from law practice

Superior Court Presiding Judge Edward Manibusan has permanently barred controversial lawyer Bruce Jorgensen from appearing as legal counsel for any person or legal entity in the Commonwealth Supreme Court or Superior Court because he has engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in the CNMI. The decision stemmed from a motion filed by Assistant Attorney General David Sosebee seeking to stop Mr. Jorgensen from engaging in the unauthorized practice of law in the CNMI.

Rhinoceros beetle possibly on Saipan

The Department of Lands & Natural Resources' Division of Agriculture, CNMI Forestry section, and NMC CREES are working together to determine if the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle (*Oryctes rhinoceros*), or the Rhinoceros beetle is on Saipan.

The adult rhinoceros beetle burrow or eat its way through the crowns of palm trees like the coconut tree and feed on the soft palm leaves inside. When the leaves unfold, they show the typical 'V-shaped' cuts on the sides of the leaves. Damage caused by the rhinoceros beetle weakens the palm trees and reduces nut production. Adult rhinoceros beetle have been known to devastate fifty percent of coconut palms within ten years of its introduction in Palau (Gressit, 1953).

Saipan, Rota, Tinian and the Northern Islands have a variety of palm trees including coconut trees, betel nut trees, and pandanus trees which have cultural and economic value to the indigenous people of the islands.

DLNR, DOA Quarantine reminds the public to prevent the entry of invasive species.

Bringing or smuggling plants soil and seeds will increase the risk of unintentionally importing a pest. Invasive species are pest that have no natural enemies and will likely destroy native flora and fauna.

The rhinoceros beetle is very robust, shiny black and measures 3.5 – 5 centimeters or 1.5 – 2 inches long. The male bears a long horn on the head, giving it a rhinoceros-like appearance. The female has only a short horn. The larva or grubs of the beetle are light yellowish in color, grow to a length of 10 – 12 cm or 4 – 5 inches and have a strongly built head and mouthparts.

If you see a rhinoceros beetle kill it, keep it in a jar or any container, and then call the following agencies: Mr. Joe Rosario, Acting Director, Division of Agriculture at 256-3301, or Dr. Marisol Quintanilla, NMC-CREES, at 234-5498 ext. 1432. ***(PR)***

NMC battles virus to boost citrus growth

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Earlier this year, a bulldozer plows the area to used for the Tinian Agriculture Experiment Station, headquarters for the Field Evaluation of Commercial Citrus Rootstocks and Cultivars project.

The Northern Marianas College recently stepped up efforts to thwart the effects of a virus that is affecting local citrus plants. Once completed, the project is expected to facilitate the introduction of citrus plants as a potential cash crop.

Launched in 2007, the project, titled the Field Evaluation of Commercial Citrus Rootstocks and Cultivars, is focused on improving the longevity, fruit quality, and quantity of citrus trees in the CNMI, which will include research to battle the Citrus Tristeza Virus, which is the culprit for most deaths of citrus plants in the CNMI.

Leading the project, which is centered at the NMC Tinian Agriculture Experiment Station, is the college's Cooperative Research Extension and Education Service 4-H Coordinator Lawrence Duponcheel and plant pathologist Dr. Dilip Nandwani.

"Citrus research centers around the world have identified and developed many virus- and disease-resistant citrus rootstocks that have proven instrumental in protecting our orchards from the devastating effects of viruses and diseases," said Lawrence Duponcheel 4-H coordinator. "We are working closely with these organizations in further procuring these rootstocks."

NMC has already received virus-resistant rootstocks and budwood from the Citrus and Date Repository in California and introduced them into the CREES Experiment Station. Efforts are also underway to introduce other species.

"With the data we collect from studying the citrus rootstocks, we hope to gradually expand into the study of other plants, such as mango and avocado, which we have received from Hawaii and Florida," said Dr. Nandwani. "NMC's Crop Production Team has also begun planning workshops and trainings in which we will display our progress so far."

Through the study, the Crop Production Team will gather information highlighting specific citrus varieties best suited to local growing conditions, as well as consumer demands. This information will then be disseminated throughout the CNMI.

"This is yet another prime example of the college's efforts to continuously enhance the services it offers to its clients and to the community," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez.

The project, which will run up to July 2012, is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Institute of Food and Agriculture's Hatch Act Funds, which supports infrastructure development. ***(NMC)***

CNMI GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

2010 Health Insurance Rates

More benefits at a Lower Price!

STAY WELL® insurance

LAST CHANCE!!! Only 8 days left until Dec. 23rd

CLASS	ACTIVE GOVT	BI-WEEKLY MEDICAL	BI-WEEKLY MED & DENTAL
Single	STAYWELL	$59.68	$82.26
	Aetna	$64.72	No Dental Plan
	StayWell Annual Savings = $131.04		
Couple	STAYWELL	$119.36	$164.52
	Aetna	$132.68	No Dental Plan
	StayWell Annual Savings = $346.32		
Family	STAYWELL	$190.81	$240.18
	Aetna	$207.10	No Dental Plan
	StayWell Annual Savings = $423.54		

STAYWELL BENEFITS

- Refund Program
- Up to $500,000 off-island coverage per year*
- 100% coverage for off-island, in-patient care*
- Out of Pocket Annual Maximum: Single = $1,500; Couple = $3,000; Family = $4,500

*Some conditions apply

AETNA BENEFITS

- No Refund Program
- Up to $200,000 off-island coverage per year
- 80% coverage for off-island, in-patient care
- Out of Pocket Annual Maximum: Single = $4,000; Couple = $8,000; Family = $12,000

Contact STAYWELL

Phone: 323-4260/61/62 • Fax: 323-4263 • Email: elplinske@staywellguam.com

Flame Tree Terrace Office Building, Lower Capitol Hill

"THANK GOD IT'S CHRISTMAS SPECIAL"
SCS Saipan Computer Services
Service beyond the sale...
GRAB AN SCS GIFT CERTIFICATE AND ADDITIONAL (1) ONE YEAR EXTENDED WARRANTY FOR EVERY DESKTOP COMPUTER PURCHASED.
FREE HP D1660 DESKJET PRINTER WITH ANY PURCHASE OF YOUR FAVORITE ACER, ASUS, TOSHIBA OR SONY NOTEBOOKS.
TAKE HOLD OF THE LATEST ACER OR ASUS NETBOOKS AND GET A FREE CARRYING CASE PLUS A MASSIVE 16GB USB FLASH DRIVE.
GET SPECIAL FREEBIES TOO FOR EVERY MINIMUM PURCHASE OF A WIDE RANGE OF ACCESSORIES.
SCS CHRISTMAS SPECIAL ENDS ON JANUARY 8, 2010.
FOR INQUIRIES PLEASE CALL 234-9110.
SOME RESTRICTIONS MAY APPLY.
hp
SONY
TOSHIBA
acer
ASUS

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 307

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Transparently destructive

The House of Representatives has passed a comprehensive financial regulatory reform package. It creates a consumer protection agency for financial services and establishes a mechanism for resolving failed, systemically important institutions. Agree or disagree with the particulars, there is no disputing the bill's significance. Certainly President Barack Obama has made reform one of his top priorities. The Senate, of course, has yet to weigh in, and it will probably be months before Obama has legislation on his desk. Yet if the House bill did come to him, he should veto it, for one reason: Whatever good it might do would be canceled out by the inclusion of Texas Republican Ron Paul's proposal to subject the Federal Reserve's monetary policymaking to regular audits by the Government Accountability Office, an arm of Congress.

Supporters suggest that the measure would merely provide "transparency" for a secretive, powerful institution. But for all its wide, bipartisan backing, this is anything but a prudent or centrist law. In fact, it is an attack — born of crisis and the attendant emotions — on the political independence the central bank must have to do its job.

The case for political independence at the Fed is elementary. Elected officials, such as members of Congress, are inherently loath to tighten the supply of money available to their constituents, even when that might be necessary to fight inflation. U.S. experience, and that of countries around the world, confirms this, which is why Congress exempted the Fed's money-supply decisions from GAO scrutiny in a 1978 law. Paul's proposal would effectively repeal that. Investors already spend enough energy and money trying to figure out where interest rates are heading without this additional dose of permanent uncertainty. Trust in the Fed, and, by extension, the dollar, will evaporate if markets believe that the Fed is courting the approval of Congress's auditors.

Paul doesn't care; he's an "end the Fed" man. In the past, other members of Congress have basically just humored him. It's a sign of the times — and not a good one — that they have been Fed-bashed into following him now. To be sure, the Fed may have been lax as a bank regulator. Monetary policy under former chairman Alan Greenspan was, in hindsight, too loose. Both failures contributed to the current crisis — during which the Fed has ventured into new and unorthodox areas to stave off depression, thus unavoidably politicizing itself. Under Chairman Ben Bernanke, the central bank has corrected some regulatory errors. It is aware of the politicization risk posed by its current monetary policies and seemingly is eager to undo them as soon as it safely can. The Fed has announced that it will phase out special lending programs for money market mutual funds, short-term corporate lending and investment banks by Feb. 1.

Paul's cure is worse than the Fed's ills, real or alleged. The central bank is already more transparent than the Fed-bashers let on: It produces an annual report; the chairman testifies before Congress; it releases, with some delay, the minutes of its policy meetings. We hope cooler heads prevail in the Senate, though a similar measure has 31 co-sponsors there. If not, Obama will have to get out his veto pen. In fact, it might save everyone a lot of trouble if he made that intention clear right away.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Why we need Christmas

By ANTHONY PELLEGRINO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Pellegrino is a longtime businessman in the CNMI and is the former president of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce.

In a few more days, we will be celebrating the most exciting holiday of the year—Christmas. Most of us are already caught in its spirit. We are busy shopping and getting the tree up and doing all the wonderful things this season signifies for us.

But as I sit thinking about the meaning of Christmas, I realize that its meaning has changed many times for me. Remember when we were all about four to six years old. We believed in Santa Claus and his elves working busily at the North Pole making all the wonderful toys that we were going to receive on that magical day called Christmas. We left cookies out on the table and struggled to stay awake through the night trying to catch a glimpse of Rudolf, the red-nosed reindeer.

We never thought too much about the true meaning of Christmas. It was just a splendid time of the year. Mommy and daddy were happy and invited friends to the house. Every night for several days, we ate unusual delicious food and sweet things.

Finally early on Christmas Day, I would rush down and begin opening my presents with a shriek as I tore each wrapping off the boxes. Mom and Dad, my brother and sister were there also as excited as I was. Then we had a fine Christmas dinner and played some family games. Oh, it was a lovely time. What fond memories! How about your memories?

As I got older someone told me that Santa Claus was not real. He was only a figure with a big round belly and a full white beard. But he did not exist. He was only in my imagination. At first that crushed me. But I wish he were real. We need him. At least his spirit still exists.

Suddenly Christmas began to take on a new meaning. I adjusted to this hard fact. But the presents and the fun activities continued so I didn't really mind.

As a young adult, I began to understand the true meaning of Christmas. I went to Church and read the Bible story of the birth of Jesus. When I gave presents I attached a card with a quote about the joy and blessing of Christmas.

Now as a much older man, I fully grasp the true meaning of Christmas. I also realize that if Christmas were not with us, it would be imperative that we invite it. But let's trace some of its background.

Christmas was not always on Dec. 25. The biblical narrative of Jesus' birth does not give a date for the event. For a time several theologians attempted to pinpoint the Nativity on different dates. This caused much confusion.

Some said Jan. 1, Jan. 6, March 25 and May 20. Finally May 20th was selected because Saint Lukas tells us that shepherds were "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night." In those days shepherds guarded their flocks day and night only at lambing time, which is in the Spring. In winter, the animals were kept in corrals unwatched.

For two centuries after Christ's birth, no one knew, and few people cared exactly when He was born. In that time Death days were important. Birthdays were not important. Even the early Church deliberately played down his divinity and birth. It is unknown exactly when or why Decenber25 became associated with Christ's birthday. The identification of the birth date of Christ did not at first inspire feasting or celebration.

It is well known that the Romans enjoyed festivals that extended over several days. This tradition was established as far back as 753 B.C. when King Romulus founded the city of Rome. Every December 25, pagan Romans celebrated the birthday of the invincible Sun God Mithras. This religion was so popular with the masses that the Emperor Aurelian proclaimed it the official state religion. In the 300's A.D., the cult seriously threatened Christianity. For a time it was unclear which faith would emerge victorious.

Every December two major pagan religious festivals were celebrated: the birthday of the invincible Sun god Mithras and Saturn, god of agriculture. The early Church fathers wished to eclipse the December 25 festivities of rival pagan religions. They needed a December celebration also.

Thus to offer converts an occasion in which to be proud and also to celebrate as other religions, the Church fathers officially recognized Christ's birth. And to offer head-on competition to the sun-worshipers feast, the Church introduced the Nativity on December 25. The idea of celebrating the Nativity on December 25 was first suggested early in the Fourth Century. However the mode of observance would be prayers. A mass was celebrated called "Christ's Mass," now known as Christmas.

The official celebration of Christmas took permanent hold in the Western World in 337 A.D. when the Roman Emperor Constantine was baptized, uniting for the first time the emperorship and the Church. Christianity became the official state religion. Then in 354 A.D. Bishop Liberius of Rome made it official to celebrate not only Christ's death but also his birth.

As the popularity of Christmas grew other traditions were added. For example, Saint Francis of Assisi popularized the Christmas crib in his celebration of the Nativity in Greccio, Italy in 1223. Saint Francis used wooden figures of Mary, Joseph, the Infant, sheep and shepherds. This started the tradition still popular to this day.

The period of time leading up to Christmas, from the Sunday nearest Nov. 30 until Christmas, is known as Advent or "the coming" and was first celebrated in the late Fourth Century. At one time Advent was observed by strict fasting, prayer and mediation. But now it is a time for Christmas parties and shopping.

It is a sad commentary on us that this beautiful tradition of the Nativity along with other Christmas tradition has been challenged by lawsuits in the United States by such groups as the American Civil Liberties Union who believe that it amounts to the government endorsing a religion, which is prohibited by the United States Constitution. However the Supreme Court has ruled that these traditions do not violate the First Amendment. Sad that we have so many

Scrooge's around us even today.

The above is only a brief background history of this glorious day. Please check how Santa Claus and mistletoe and other beautiful customs joined to make Christmas the merry and hope-

See WHY on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

New corruption ranking says a lot

By ANDRES OPPENHEIMER
McClatchy Newspapers

Andres Oppenheimer is a Latin America correspondent for the Miami Herald, 1 Herald Plaza, Miami, Fla. 33132; e-mail: aoppenheimer@miamiherald.com.

A new survey on corruption around the world confirms what many of us have long suspected: Fiery populist leaders who rise to power vowing to eradicate corruption often end up leading sleazier governments than their predecessors.

If you look at the 2009 Corruption Perception Index released by Transparency International, a Germany-based nongovernment group that is considered to be the world's most influential corruption watchdog, Latin America is a case in point.

The ranking, based on more than a half-dozen separate polls, lists 180 countries around the world. They go from the ones perceived to be the most honest (New Zealand and Denmark) to the ones seen as most corrupt (Afghanistan and Somalia).

In Latin America, excluding Caribbean countries, the regional champions of corruption are—in order—Venezuela, Paraguay, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Honduras, Bolivia and Argentina, the survey said. Ironically, most of these countries' presidents have won elections presenting themselves as anti-corruption crusaders.

In Venezuela, where President Hugo Chavez was elected in 1998 to a big extent thanks to his promises to crack down on what he accurately described as a corrupt political class, corruption has worsened since.

When Transparency began to do its Corruption Perception Index in 2001, Venezuela ranked 69th in a list of 91 countries—or at the bottom 25th percentile of the world's most corrupt countries.

In 2009, Venezuela ranked 162 in the list of 180 countries, or in the 10th percentile of the world's most corrupt.

Is there a relation between populism and corruption, I asked Alejandro Salas, head of Transparency's Americas department? I noted that virtually all of Latin America's most corruption-ridden countries are led—or were led until recently—by populist leaders.

"You could say so," Salas said. "There is a direct relation between populism and institutional weakness. And institutional weakness leads to corruption."

Salas told me that when he looks at this year's index, he sees three groups of countries in Latin America.

"The first group is that of the countries that are best rated, which are Chile, Uruguay, Puerto Rico and Costa Rica," he said.

"They are widely perceived as the less corrupt, and they tend to have stability, free and regular elections and, in most cases, independent judiciaries and other effective systems of checks and balances.

"The second group is that of countries that are in the middle of the list, such as Brazil, Mexico, Colombia and Peru," he continued. "They are countries with contradicting trends: They have some modern institutions, but also some remnants of ancient practices that breed corruption.

"The third group is made up of the countries with the lowest ratings, which in recent years have suffered a kind of 'state capture' by their charismatic leaders," Salas said.

He added, "In countries such as Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia, government leaders have shattered the system of checks and balances. And when there are no watchdogs, you tend to have more arbitrary allocations of funds, and fewer transparent bids for government contracts."

What about the United States? I asked Salas. The United States shows up in the ranking as the second most honest country in the Americas, after Canada.

Salas said that the good U.S. standing in the survey may be due to the fact that the polls asked about government—not private—corruption.

In addition, survey respondents may have felt that the U.S. government responded rapidly and strongly to financial scandals.

My opinion: I would not be surprised if in coming years, as we find out more about the Bush administrations scandalously lax regulatory practices that helped cause the current recession, the United States will fall a few notches in the corruption perception index. It should.

But I'm not surprised by the fact that Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Nicaragua and other countries led by authoritarian populist leaders lead the region's corruption ranking.

They are the same leaders who have tried to co-opt all branches of government, and who are now trying to curb the media.

The more they succeed in grabbing absolute powers, the more corrupt—and closer to world corruption champion Somalia—their countries will be.

Felis Noche Buena!

Ginen: JOHN S. DELROSARIO, JR.

Pagu na Bietnes sumen namagof na kompliañus mafañagun i Niño Jesus. Esteague na tiempu `nai ta talun ruminueba haanita gi sattun na finaisen gi Nanalibre para u bendisi hit yan todus familiata. Sumen namagof na okasion `nai mattu i lahen Yuus para u tutuhon pumetsige tinagu Yuus Tata pot satbasion todus.

I mas dañkulu na selebrasion i Noche Buena. Tat ti hinatsa esperensiaña maseha mamatmus gi halom chubaskun didog na chinatsaga. Haye un` soda listu ninae` hau nu i kanaiña. Yangin guaha chinatsaga, un` ratu ha` malimienda sa` tiempun inafamauleg este na okasion. I finattun i Niño Jesus ha patta I tasin satbasion para todus.

Este i tiempun Noche Buena sessu ha koniyu tatte `nai megaiña gi entre hita mañasaga gi hagas soñgsoñg Chalan Kanoa, Susupe yan San Antonio. Ta usune umatiende Misan Gayu, dispues ta oriyaye lamasan nana umaprubecha i mañge na finatinas amotsa. Dispues man-diskansa hit para ta nañga i finattun i Nino`an manana si Yuus.

Ta konduse finatoña ya kada unu dumimu ya man-ñgiñge gi Niño Jesus. Estague `nai mafattu gi hinasoghu palabran un` kantan noche buena, Tafan Magof Todus. Ilelegña un` patte guihe na sunidu: "Jesus Yuus mame, gi nuebu na sakan, gai ase` nu hame, apatta i dañu, nae` nu i deskansu i mangaige `sta gi naftan, yan ayo seha kasu matai na sakan". Magahet na esta tutuhu lagohu `an mattuyu guine na patte. Hu hahassu i mañge na finapos mame yan mañainahu, maneluhu.

Megai esta man-hanau para i taihinekog na deskanson niha. Guaha esta man-malañgu mientras i otru siha ni manaigue gi oriyata buente man-e`emahalañg nu i mañge yan sattun na dinaña familia antes. Huñgan, megai gi entre hita man-e`ensinahyau gi halum teug na rimulinon pineble. Lao mañgontentu yan man-magof hit gi dididi na guinahata. Sensian yinease` gi todu kinalamten muna sumen fitme i pegsi dinaña yan inafamauleg gi entre natibu siha.

Dispues, tafa taya`i man-taya`ta gi tatten fruenten mañge yan humidde na linala poble. Gi hilu pinebleta, ha afuetsas hit man-daña dibuenamente `nai ta pega gi hilu lamasa i dididi na chinile`ta para benefisiun todus. Sige i famaguon man-hugandu mientras i mañaina maripasa nuebu siha na sinisede, punta pot punta guine. Mañge na chaleg hu huhuñgog ginen korason niha. A`gañg yan namagof lokue na esalau ginen famaguon siha gi oriya. Estague i likidu na kustumbreta komu natibu.

Maseha machuchuda minagofhu, gi mismu tiempu ha balutanyu trisnesteghu `an hu hahassu todus ayu siha i man-pinalolopu chinatsaga. Taya mas nina` siñahu ke para baihu tayuyute todus pot para u soda maseha dididi na esperansa guine na namagof tiempu. Diberas taya mas ke fuetsan Nanalibreta! Ya maseha amanu `nai gaige hau, un` sumen namagof na Felis Na Noche Buena para hagu yan familiamu! ***

Un` Christmas, estabayu Honolulu `nai masañgane un` lahita na taya esta remediuña i kanset gi pichoña. Ti ensegidas ha fondugue ayu na sinañganen mediku gi patgon. Lau guahu yan si nanaña kumomprende i sumen natriste na notisia.

Finagchae pueñgen Noche Buena. Hanae`yu i patgon ni iyoña ukelele ya ha faisenyu para bai`n kanta. Sige ham kumanta ya esta hu nanana` tuhu lagohu sa mampos magof i patgon umusune kantan Noche Buena siha. Mientras tantus, sigeyu lokue manayuyot ayudu gi Nanalibreta sa` hokog esperansa para i patgon.

Ti apmam deste biradaña magi, ma-agañg i patgon para i taihinekog na deskansoña. Hu tayuyuyute si John Boy kada Noche Buena. Hahassu lokue haye atuñgu miyu gi parehu na finapos ya in` tayuyute na biahen Noche Buena. Felis Noche Buena para todus!

The siren song of Tickle Me Elmo

By JONAH BERGER
Special to The Washington Post

Berger is a marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

It's that time of year again: the mad rush to get the season's "it" gift.

Are you reading this while scanning eBay for an electronic hamster? Happy holidays!

The "it" gift tradition is long and proud. From Tickle Me Elmo and Furbys to Razor Scooters and Robosapien, every year a couple of items rocket to the top of the "must have" list. Hundreds of people camp outside stores, hoping to get their hands on the prize.

This isn't just for kids. Adults follow crazes on their wish lists, too: Think about the iPod Touch, the Amazon Kindle or digital cameras. Such gifts are examples of social epidemics — instances when many people do the same thing at the same time.

Why do we end up with the same all-star stack of presents? It could be that the best are simply better than the rest. But more likely, an item's elevation to "it"-gift status is random. The Zhu Zhu hamsters could have just as easily been Zhu Zhu gerbils. Yes, the gift that thousands of well-meaning, if slightly obsessive, people thirst for could have been something else.

Consumer behavior is interdependent, not independent; our behavior depends on the behavior of those around us. This dynamic affects both what people talk about and what they buy. Conversations are often driven by the desire to establish common ground, so we talk about celebrities, the weather or the local sports team. We're more likely to discuss bestsellers and blockbusters than niche books or films, and this influences buzz about gifts. When talk turns to the holiday season and the presents we are buying, we tend to bring up items we think others have heard of or might want to talk about. It's easier to brag that you're getting little Susie a Razor Scooter than to explain the rare Swedish toy you're importing.

Social influence leads us to buy what other people buy. While the idea that people imitate others is nothing new, some sociologists recently designed an experiment, with results published in the journal Science, that shows how social influence shapes collective outcomes. In the study, people visited a Web site where they could listen to songs and download them free. Some people were given information about what previous site visitors had downloaded, and this led to convergence: People tended to download songs others had chosen.

In addition, participants in the experiment were split into eight groups and could see the prior downloads only of people in their own group. What the researchers found was powerful. Across the separate groups, the songs that became "hits" were vastly different. The top song in one social world was a flop in another and vice versa. Why? Well, if people imitate others, then whatever gets an early advantage in popularity will carry the day.

As with these "hit" songs, "it" gifts depend less on their innate qualities — their furry, adorable nature, for example — and more on human psychology. Because we tend to talk about and do the same things as others around us, many people end up wanting the same thing.

So as you stand in a long line trying to get your hands on whatever it is that everyone else seems to want this year, stop to recognize that this may have less to do with the gift and more about our herd instincts. And remember that whoever you are giving the present to may be just as happy with something else. As long as everyone else wants it, too.

WHY

From Page 10

ful day it is. Christmas is a classic example of how cultures and countries have contributed their share in making a holiday mean so much for all of us.

This season does more to bring diverse peoples together than any other holiday. It makes strangers friends. It reunites families. It makes us open our hearts in song and glad tidings. It says: There is a new beginning ahead!

As I mentioned at the earlier, Christmas is the brightest day of the year. Children wake up with great expectations of toys and all sorts of goodies. Strangers smile and greet strangers with a warm embrace. Many us will participate in Christ's mass in that day. Yes, Christmas is also a glorious time to reaffirm our faith in the future. For Christ is the true emblem of hope and peace.

For the next few days, let us pause from the madness of trying to make a dollar and striking out at each other. Instead on Christmas Eve, let us pray that we wake up on Christmas Day with a rekindled flame of hope for a better CNMI. Also on this blessed day let us pay homage to the Baby Jesus who brigs renewed hope for the future.

We have so much to be grateful for. If you doubt this, look around at other parts of the world. Let us bow our heads and give thanks for all we have. We are a blessed people living in a blessed land, the CNMI!

From my family to yours" May God bless and keep you and your family, safe, healthy and happy. A Merry Christmas to All!

The Weather

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 15 to 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers. Northeast winds 20 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲86° ▼77°	▲85° ▼77°	▲84° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼76
Palau	Cloudy	▲89	▼78
Yap	Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Chuuk	Mostly Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼78
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲87	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼78

Around The Globe

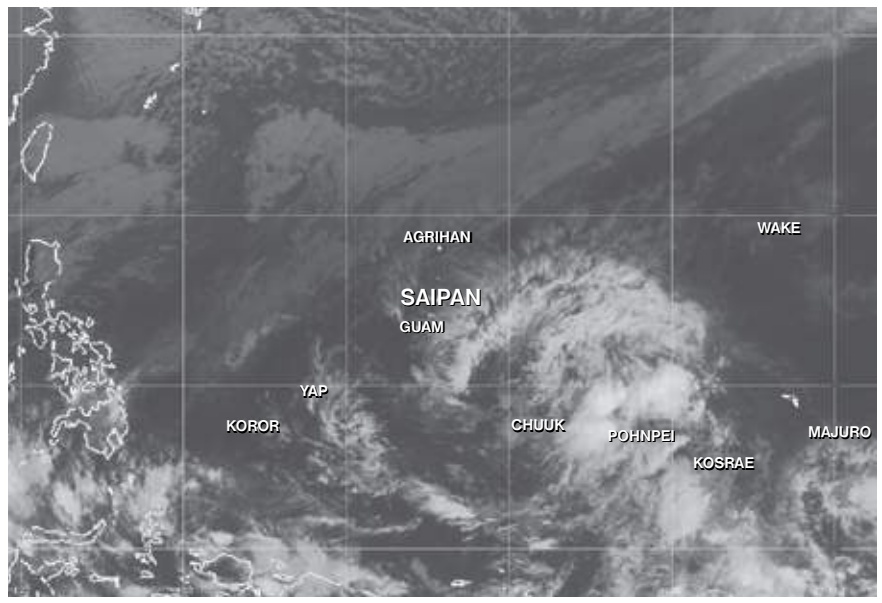
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲68	▼53
Beijing	Sunny	▲39	▼24
Hong Kong	Mostly Cloudy	▲60	▼53
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲78	▼68
London	Rain/Snow	▲39	▼32
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲68	▼50
Manila	Showers	▲70	▼50
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼58
Miami	Cloudy	▲70	▼50
New York	Partly Sunny	▲36	▼22
Osaka	Rain/Snow	▲45	▼30
Paris	Rain/Snow	▲35	▼30
Pusan	Sunny	▲47	▼26
Rome	Showers	▲49	▼46
Salem	Cloudy	▲49	▼37
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲57	▼45
Seoul	Sunny	▲35	▼25
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼29
Washington, DC	Partly Sunny	▲40	▼25

Tides

Saipan Harbor

4:27 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.1 Feet
11:37 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
5:25 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
9:41 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2009

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough stretches eastward from 1N130E through a circulation centered south of Pohnpei near 4N158E to end at EQ170E. Convergent winds near the trough axis are generating scattered showers and a few thunderstorms southeast of Yap between 7N and 3N from 141E to 149E. A larger area of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms associated with the circulation is located over Kosrae and Pohnpei between 11N and 4N from 155E to 165E and also southeast of Kosrae within 100 miles of a line from 4N165E to EQ169E. A surface trough extends southwestward from 9N180 to EQ177E. Scattered showers are found southeast of Majuro between 6N and the equator from 173E to 176E. A cold front stretches southwestward from just north of IWO to at 25N154E to 22N143E, then continues as a shear line to end at 11N130E. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are occurring along and up to 370 miles northwest of this boundary.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Tuesday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM
Wednesday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Thursday	6:40 AM	5:53 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:53 AM	10:46 PM
Tuesday	10:29 AM	11:32 PM
Wednesday	11:03 AM	12:19 PM
Thursday	11:38 AM	
Friday	12:14 AM	12:06 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 18, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka effective Dec 19 Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	4, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka effective Dec 18 Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1 via GUM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

SUBSCRIPTION Published Monday to Saturday, *Saipan Tribune* offers door-to-door on-island delivery at an annual rate of $160. For additional subscription information, call (670) 235-8747 or 235-2769, or fax 235-3740.

ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Hawaii dimmed by education, election, health cuts

HONOLULU (AP)—Hawaii public schools are closed most Fridays, rats scurry across bananas in uninspected stores and there may not be enough money to run the next election.

About the only parts of the state untouched by the foul economy are its sparkling beaches and world-class surfing.

Hawaii's money troubles are creating a society more befitting a tropical backwater than a state celebrating its 50th anniversary and preparing to welcome President Barack Obama home for Christmas this week.

"There is community energy and outrage building up," said James Koshiba, a co-founder of the activist organization and Web site Kanu Hawaii, speaking about the cuts to education. "The people have to play a bigger role. Folks won't forget how this unfolds come election time."

■ Hawaii now has the shortest school year in the nation after the state and teachers union agreed to shutter schools for 17 days a year, leaving 171,000 students without class on most Fridays. Negotiations to reopen them collapsed last week.

■ Food establishments often go uninspected, a fact highlighted by an Internet video showing rats roaming freely across produce in a Honolulu Chinatown market. The state has just nine health inspectors on Oahu to handle nearly 6,000 markets and restaurants.

■ The state Elections Office said it may not be able to afford a pending special election, which would leave half of the state's population without representation in the U.S. House of Representatives until September 2010.

■ Homelessness is on the rise as mental health, child abuse, welfare and daycare programs run short on cash.

And next year may be even worse because tax revenues continue to plunge with the economy.

Hawaii is far from alone in cutting the size of government during the global financial downturn, with nearly every state resorting to across-the-board cuts, furloughs or layoffs to make ends meet. This tiny state of 1.3 million residents faces a projected $1 billion budget deficit through June 2011.

But Hawaii stands apart in how its government shrinkage has ripped into what are generally considered to be core functions: education, public health, elections and services for the disadvantaged.

Gov. Linda Lingle warned that government would not look the same after she ordered most departments to slash their budgets by about 14 percent.

"Government is not going to be able to provide the array of services at the level that we used to because we have billions of dollars less," the Republican governor said earlier this month. "We need to be creative and we need to be realistic. We can't be in a state of denial about the reduction in revenues that we have."

Among the worst-off states nationwide are California, Nevada, Arizona, Florida and Michigan because of the collapse of the housing market and struggles in the auto industry, said Arturo Perez, a fiscal analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The organization listed Hawaii, despite having largely withstood the housing market collapse, as one of 13 states with a pessimistic budget outlook for the current fiscal year, and it's projected to have the second-largest shortfall, percentage-wise, in the 2012 fiscal year, at 28.8 percent, behind only Arizona at 30 percent.

"What we hear over and over from the states is that everything is on the table," Perez said. "When you see K-12 education being cut, which is often among the most popular programs, that speaks volumes about the tough choices the states are having to make."

Honolulu's shortage of health inspectors isn't new, but the cuts now call for the elimination of the Health Department's vector control unit, which helps homeowners and businesses eradicate rodent, mosquito, fly and other pest problems.

"This is not good government," said Larry Geller, the Internet blogger and political watchdog who posted the rat video. "Other states are struggling with the same problems, and many of them are making difficult decisions. But Hawaii ... I think the choices have been poorly made."

As for the pending election, Hawaii's elections chief said his office doesn't have enough money to run either a regular or all-mail vote. A special election will be needed because U.S. Rep. Neil Abercrombie plans to resign in the next few weeks to run for governor, leaving a vacancy in Congress. If money can't be found, that spot may not be filled until the regularly scheduled primary election.

Meanwhile, services to poor and disadvantaged populations are dropping off when they are most needed, said Alex Santiago, executive director of PHOCUSED, a consortium of nonprofits.

Unemployment, food stamp applications, poverty rates and domestic violence are on the rise, according to a recently released study by his organization.

The homeless who camp in tents along a stretch of Waikiki beaches are giving tourists from around the world a glimpse of the financial and social problems that Hawaii is facing. But many homeless families have been forced out far west to the Waianae Coast.

"The homeless situation is right in your face. Almost everywhere you go now you see people who are absolutely devastated and have nowhere else to turn," Santiago said. "We've allowed our responsibilities to slip."

Limits imposed on the amount of time mental health patients can get help from specialists will lead to more relapses, crime and hospitalizations, said Poka Laenui, executive director for Hale Naau Pono, the largest provider of community health services on Oahu's Waianae Coast.

"Half of the problem is a financial problem," he said. "But there's another problem, and that's a lack of leadership. It's not leadership when you get out a calculator and take across-the-board reductions in services. Leadership is looking at specific programs and setting appropriate priorities."

AP

A homeless man who wished not identify himself naps under his blanket at Kapiolani Park Friday Dec. 18, 2009.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP10-CHC-030

SUBMISSION: JANUARY 19, 2010 • TIME: 3:00 P.M.

"REGISTERED DIETITIAN (CLINICAL/RENAL) FOR THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTH CENTER"

THE RFP PACKAGE MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY IN LOWERBASE, SAIPAN DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP IS DUE NO LATER THAN **4:30 P.M., LOCAL TIME, THURSDAY, JANUARY 07, 2010.**

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO US CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

LEGAL NOTICE
ATTENTION

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), U.S. Department of Justice, gives notice that the property listed below was seized for forfeiture pursuant to Title 21, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 881, because the property was used or acquired as a result of a violation of the Controlled Substances Act (Title 21, U.S.C., Sections 801 et seq.). An owner or lienor may file a petition for remission or mitigation of the forfeiture with the Forfeiture Counsel, Asset Forfeiture Section, Office of Operations Management, Drug Enforcement Administration, HQs Forfeiture Response, P.O. Box 1475, Quantico, Virginia 22134-1475, pursuant to Title 19, U.S.C., Section 1618, and the regulations governing the petition process set forth in Title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 9. Correspondence sent via private delivery must be sent to the Asset Forfeiture Section, Office of Operations Management, Drug Enforcement Administration, 8701 Morrissette Drive, Springfield, Virginia 22152. **In addition to, or in lieu of petitioning for remission or mitigation, a person may contest the forfeiture of the seized property in UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT by filing a claim with the Forfeiture Counsel of the DEA pursuant to Title 18, U.S.C., Section 983(a).** Upon the filing of a claim under Title 18, U.S.C., Section 983(a), a claimant may request, pursuant to Section 983(f), release of the seized property during the pendency of the forfeiture proceeding due to hardship. A petition, claim, or other correspondence shall be deemed filed with the Asset Forfeiture Section, when received by the DEA at either of the addresses noted above. Submissions by facsimile or other electronic means will not be accepted. **The names of persons or businesses appearing in this notice are not necessarily criminal defendants or suspects, nor does the appearance of their names in this notice necessarily mean that they are the target of DEA investigations or other activities.**

SECOND NOTICE
LAST DATE TO FILE JANUARY 28, 2010
PLACE SEIZED, SEIZED FROM, DATE SEIZED

DISTRICT OF NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
09-DEA-520924, $1,407.00 U.S. Currency, Saipan, MP, Huang, Ya Bin, 08/20/09
09-DEA-521043, Men's Omega Constellation Wristwatch, Ser No 3961201, Saipan, MP, Huang, Biao, 08/17/09

[The property listed above is NOT for sale. The DEA DOES NOT sell forfeited property and the DEA DOES NOT have information on property for sale.]

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

IT&E would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on December 22nd, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before December 22nd.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION IT&E CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE*.

* You have the right to dispute this notice. You must state your claim in person or in writing no later than December 22nd. You must pay any amount not in dispute to avoid disconnection. Payment denotes acceptance of all charges.

If you have questions regarding billing or service please call Customer Service at **682-4ITE (4483)** or visit our Customer Service Representatives at our Chalan Lau-Lau Office.

IT&E
Life in Motion

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
2010-CDA-03RFP

CLOSING DATE: MONDAY, JANUARY 11, 2010 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"OFFICE SPACE FOR CDA TINIAN BRANCH"

COPIES OF THE PROPOSAL SPECIFICATION MAY BE PICKED UP AT THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY SAIPAN OFFICE, GUALO RAI WAKIN'S BLDG. OR THE CDA OFFICE TINIAN AT THE KING'S BLDG. DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS OR BY FACSIMILE REQUEST TO 235-7147.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE PROPOSAL IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/s/ **MANUEL A. SABLAN**
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB10-CGC-031 (1-3)

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 13, 2010 • TIME: 10:30 A.M.

"LEASE OF THREE (3) OFFICE SPACES
(1) - SAIPAN BRANCH
(2) - ROTA BRANCH
(3) TINIAN BRACH
FOR THE COMMUNITY GUIDANCE CENTER"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFIC EOF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THIS IS FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

THE LESSOR MUST COMPLY WITH CNMI PUBLIC LAW 15-23, ARTICLE 5, SECTION 8652 (A) - (D).

/s/ **JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ**
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ **HERMAN S. SABLAN**
Director, P&S

Business

Senators OK defense budget bill, much left to 2010

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Senate cleared its year-end plate of some must-do work Saturday as it passed a critical budget bill that blends money for the Pentagon with additional help for the jobless.

The early morning 88-10 vote, taken as a blizzard buffeted the Capitol, permitted lawmakers to resume their acrimonious debate on health care, which Democrats now expect to finish by Christmas. The spending measure now goes to President Barack Obama for his signature.

It wraps up work on perhaps Congress' most fundamental job: funding the annual budgets of Cabinet agencies and the rest of the government.

But the $626 billion defense bill measure also demonstrated the failings of a Congress unable to address many of its most pressing tasks, such as passing a highway bill and making sure doctors don't absorb a 21 percent hit in Medicare payments. In a boon for the wealthy, the estate tax temporarily will expire Jan. 1, even as people inheriting smaller amounts will face larger capital gains bills.

Having run out of time and patience, Democrats used the must-pass Pentagon measure to drag along several two-month extensions of expiring legislation. They include unemployment benefits for the long-term jobless, health care subsidies for those out of work, highway and transit money and parts of the terrorism-fighting Patriot Act.

Resolving those issues in February would clutter next year's agenda as Obama's Democratic allies turn to trying to rein in the spiraling budget deficit and passing his upcoming request for additional troops in Afghanistan, which promises to be a very difficult task.

The impressive vote Saturday was evidence of the broad support for paying for troops fighting overseas and other elements of the Pentagon budget. The path to that point, however, was poisoned with partisanship as Republicans sought to derail the measure in an effort to stretch out action on health care past Christmas.

"Senate Republicans have made us jump through every procedural hurdle just to have this vote and threatened to block funding for our troops—all in order to delay us from debating health care reform," said Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. "It is incomprehensible that Republicans would even threaten to stop funding our troops and helping those who are struggling."

Just four Republicans joined with Democrats on an important test requiring 60 votes. Confident that Republicans such as Sen. Thad Cochran of Mississippi would vote with them, Democratic leaders gave the OK for Sen. Joe Lieberman, a Connecticut independent and Orthodox Jew who caucuses with Democrats, spend the eighth night of Hanukkah with his family.

White-collar jobless join FedEx, UPS for holidays

NEW YORK (AP)—Ed Gullo never thought he'd be on this side of a package delivery.

Gullo, 61, of Newburgh, N.Y., is driving a truck for FedEx during the holiday shipping rush that started after Thanksgiving. Gullo is no veteran truck driver. He's a news writer with experience at ABC and CNN, who found gigs hard to come by in the weak economy.

FedEx and UPS, the world's two largest package delivery companies, hire thousands of extra workers every holiday season, usually college students and 20-somethings. This year, the unemployment rate is at 10 percent and many experienced professionals are looking for work. A lot more people came to job fairs wearing a coat and tie, said UPS spokesman Norman Black.

Rolf Wick applied online with UPS after being laid off from an IT management position. The 42-year-old, who lives in San Francisco, was managing a staff of consultants and administrators. Now he's a driver's helper, tracking the status of packages and running from house to house making deliveries.

Gullo earns about $13 an hour with FedEx, far less than the $36 an hour he makes on average as a free-lancer in the news business. He said he felt out of his element at the start of training, where he made minimum wage for a week driving a small rental truck "around a lot of cones." That's some difference from last holiday season, when Gullo was writing for popular programs such as "World News Now" and "Good Morning America."

Another difference is the physical nature of the work. Both Gullo and Wick say they're sore after 50-hour weeks of loading and unloading packages filled with holiday gifts. UPS expects to deliver roughly 22 million small packages on its busiest day this year—projected to be Monday. FedEx, based in Memphis, Tenn., shipped about 14.1 million packages on Dec. 14, its peak holiday shipping day.

"I say sometimes, 'I know what I'm having for dessert tonight—and that will be a couple aspirin,'" Wick said.

UPS said it made fewer holiday hires this year to keep costs down—about 50,000 seasonal workers this year compared with 60,000 two years ago. The company did not release year-ago figures, although it said applications rose 20 percent compared with 2008. FedEx's ground division added 14,000 temporary workers—about the same as last year.

Shoppers in East stay home to avoid big snowfall

WASHINGTON (AP)—"Super Saturday" may just end up as Snowy Saturday in much of the eastern U.S.

The last Saturday of shopping before Christmas, usually one of the busiest days of the year for retailers, was snowed out on most of the East Coast by blizzard-like conditions that stretched from the Carolinas to New England.

Many retailers were open but crowds were sparse on a day stores count on for a successful season.

Treacherous roads and near whiteout conditions kept many shoppers away from shopping malls and other stores. For retailers hoping for a better holiday season than last year's dismal sales, the bad weather was especially painful.

"You are looking at your busiest day of the year and taking it away," said Steven Aarons, manager of Barstons Child Play, a toy store in Washington.

Forecasts for the Washington region called for up to 20 inches of snow. A heavy coat was already on the ground by the time most stores opened around midmorning.

Compounding problems were snow-covered roads and spotty public transportation. Shopping malls were especially affected by bad roads. In Washington, the Metro subway system shut down aboveground stations in the early afternoon, effectively cutting off rail service to many big suburban shopping centers.

In the Friendship Heights section of the city, usually a bustling retail area with big department stores and upscale shops, most foot traffic came from work crews scraping away snow and spreading salt. Some big stores opened on time, but others remained dark after their posted opening hours. Even the Salvation Army stand was unstaffed.

APAFS elects officers for '09-'10 term

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Standing from left: Mary Okada, Guam Community College; Jason Miyashita, APAFS Instructor; Benjamin Graham, Graham Consulting; Alexander R. Narruhn, FSM Social Security Administrator; Mark U. Rudimch, Senate, OEK; Masa-Aki Emesiochl, College of Micronesia-Land Grant; Aren Palik, Pacific Islands Development Bank; Phillip Mendiola-Long, Marianas Public Land Trust; Ron Cenicola, National Telecommunications Authority; Daniel Roland, APAFS Executive Director. Seated left to right: Anna Mendiola, APAFS Secretary, FSM Development Bank; Patrick U. Tellei, APAFS Vice Chair, Palau Community College; Gerard Cruz, APAFS Chairman, Government of Guam Employees Retirement Fund and David O'Brien, APAFS Treasurer, University of Guam.

HAGATNA, Guam—The Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies unanimously elected 2009-10 officers during the organization's annual Board of Governors meeting held at the Fiesta Resort in Guam last Dec. 9.

Officers, who were elected to two-year terms, are as follows:

- Chairman – Gerard C. Cruz (incumbent), Government of Guam Employees Retirement Fund;
- Vice Chair – Patrick Tellei (past secretary), Palau Community College;
- Treasurer – Dave O'Brien (incumbent), University of Guam; and
- Secretary – Anna Mendiola, FSM Development Bank.

APAFS is a non-profit educational and charitable association, founded for and by representatives from public and private institutional investment funds from around the Asia Pacific region in 2000.

"It's truly impressive that these individuals were elected unanimously as officers for the Asia Pacific Association for Fiduciary Studies," said APAFS Executive Director Daniel A. Roland. "As fiduciaries, we work to secure the assets we are entrusted to protect with the same intensity we would secure our personal assets. The fact that these professionals were chosen to lead us as an organization with that mission says a lot about their leadership abilities, their education and their character."

Items discussed at the meeting included the Regional Country Conferences, strategic plans for the 2010 Pacific Region Investment Conference Educational Component and the plans for the 10th Annual Pacific Region Investment Conference to be held in Manila in 4th quarter of 2010, marking the fourth consecutive year it is taking place in the Philippines capital.

The conference, considered to be the premier investment conference in the region, and the main educational resource for APAFS members, features world-class experts who link training with a regional understanding of current and relevant issues in the fiduciary marketing. More than 300 fiduciaries, investment managers and other finance professionals from around the US and Asia attended the 9th conference held in Manila on Oct. 8 and 9. ***(APAFS)***

BUSINESS BRIEFS

GM to end Saab brand after talks with buyer fail

NEW YORK (AP)—General Motors is killing off another well-known brand—Saab, a quirky line of cars known for angular roof lines and ignition keyholes between the front seats—after talks with a Dutch would-be buyer collapsed. GM, Dutch automaker Spyker Cars and the government of Sweden, where Saabs are made, were in discussions as late as Friday morning. Spyker said the sale was too complicated to complete quickly. GM declined to elaborate on why the deal failed. "We worked 24/7 for three weeks, but the complexity of the transaction in combination with the strict deadline simply did not allow us to complete the transaction," said Victor Muller, CEO of Spyker, a producer of exotic sports cars.

Regulators shutter 2 big Calif. banks, 5 others

WASHINGTON (AP)—Regulators on Friday shut down two big California banks, as well as banks in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan and Illinois, bringing to 140 the number of U.S. banks brought down this year by the weak economy and mounting loan defaults. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. took over all seven. Regulators shuttered First Federal Bank of California, based in Santa Monica, with $6.1 billion in assets and $4.5 billion in deposits, as was as Imperial Capital Bank of La Jolla, Calif., with about $4 billion in assets and $2.8 billion in deposits.

General Growth declares 19 cent dividend

CHICAGO (AP)—Mall operator General Growth Properties said Saturday that it will pay a 19-cent dividend in cash and common stock to shareholders. The dividend is payable on Jan. 28 to stockholders of record on Dec. 28. Shareholders may chose to take it in cash, stock or combination of the two. Those who do not make a choice will be given stock. General Growth, the nation's second-largest mall operator, filed the largest U.S. real estate bankruptcy case in history in April. A bankruptcy court approved the dividend payment, the company said.

Nation

Blizzard-like storm slams East, region snowed in

WASHINGTON (AP)—A blizzard-like storm rocked the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast on Saturday, crippling travel across the region and leaving hundreds of thousands of customers without power.

Five deaths appeared to have been caused by the storm system, which stretched from the Carolinas north to New England and also spread into some Midwestern states. The 16 inches of snow that fell at Reagan National Airport outside Washington was the most ever recorded for a single December day, while about 16 inches had also fallen in Philadelphia.

Those who did venture out were treated to nearly desolate stores on what is usually one of the busiest shopping days of the year. There were virtually no lines to get a picture with a mall Santa on the last weekend before Christmas.

The National Guard used Humvees to rescue stranded motorists in Virginia and some 500 people had sought warmth and refuge in emergency shelters.

"The snow has not stopped falling, the storm isn't over, and folks should not think this is crying wolf," said Laura Southard, a spokeswoman for the Virginia Department of Emergency Management.

More than two feet of snow fell in some areas since Friday. Public transportation in the nation's capital nearly ground to a halt, but it wasn't enough to keep senators from staying in session to debate health care reform.

AP

Snow covers the a decorated trees in front of the West Wing of the White House in Washington, Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009.

The slow-moving storm was headed to the Northeast, where forecasters said parts of Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts could see more than 16 inches by Sunday night. Forecasters expected the storm to drop as many as 10 inches on New York City.

Snowplows cleared the runway at Andrews Air Force Base in suburban Washington as President Barack Obama returned from climate talks in Copenhagen. The White House said Obama rode in a motorcade back to the White House, instead of taking his helicopter, because of the conditions.

The region was virtually a sea of white. The Smithsonian Institution closed its museums, and the National Mall, which normally would be swarming with tourists, instead was the scene of snowball fights and cross-country skiers.

For Chris and Kelly Fitzpatrick, who were visiting from Clearwater, Fla., the winter wonderland came at the perfect time.

"It's her fault that we're out so long. She wants to walk and walk and walk," said Chris Fitzpatrick, 38.

Obama hails 60th Senate vote for health care

WASHINGTON (AP)—Jubilant Democrats locked in Nebraska Sen. Ben Nelson as the 60th and decisive vote for historic health care legislation Saturday, putting President Barack Obama's signature issue firmly on a path for Christmas Eve passage.

Obama

At the White House, Obama swiftly welcomed the breakthrough, saying, "After a nearly century-long struggle, we are on the cusp of making health care reform a reality in the United States of America."

In the Capitol, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid smiled broadly when asked if Nelson's decision gave him the 60-vote majority necessary to overcome solid Republican opposition. "Seems that way," he said. The Nevada Democrat agreed to a series of concessions on abortion and other issues demanded by Nelson in daylong talks on Friday, then informed Obama of the agreement in a late night phone call as the president flew home from climate talks in Copenhagen.

The Congressional Budget Office said the Senate bill would extend coverage to more than 30 million Americans who lack it. It also imposes new regulations to curb abuses of the insurance industry, and the president noted one last-minute addition would impose penalties on companies that "arbitrarily jack up prices" in advance of the legislation taking effect.

CBO analysts also said the legislation would cut federal deficits by $132 billion over 10 years and possibly much more in the subsequent decade.

The developments unfolded on a day of improbables—a snowstorm enveloped the Capitol, creating whiteout conditions outside; while inside senators staged dueling news conferences as if their presence on the Saturday before Christmas was the rule rather than the rarest of exceptions.

At its core, the legislation would create a new insurance exchange where consumers could shop for affordable coverage that complied with new federal guidelines. Most Americans would be required to purchase insurance, with federal subsidies available to help defray the cost for lower and middle income individuals and families.

Fear of violence grows in mountaintop mining fight

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (AP)—It was the slap heard 'round the coalfields: Cordelia Ruth Tucker, wearing the fluorescent-striped shirt of a miner, strode past West Virginia state troopers and into a stream of marchers protesting mountaintop removal mining to deliver an audible smack.

The 54-year-old Rock Creek woman isn't talking as she awaits trial on a battery charge. Her neighbor, environmental activist Judy Bonds, says she was on the receiving end of the slap.

And Bonds—like many in a place where labor disputes have a violent history—fears more blows will follow as the fight escalates over mountaintop removal, the uniquely Appalachian form of strip mining that involves blowing tops off mountains and dumping the rubble in valleys.

For nearly a decade, environmentalists and the mining industry battled in courtrooms and the Capitol. Arrests were unheard of.

This year, as mountaintop removal has drawn more scrutiny from regulators, policy makers and the public, the activists' strategy changed.

There have been nearly 100 arrests in 20 protests, most involving trespassing. Led by a new group called Climate Ground Zero, the activists have chained themselves to giant dump trucks, scaled 80-foot trees to stop blasting and paddled into a 9 million-gallon sludge pond. They've blocked roads, hung banners and staged sit-ins.

Virginia-based Massey Energy claims a single 3 1/2-hour occupation at Progress Coal Co. in Twilight cost the company $300,000. Two environmentalists pleaded no contest to battery after that incident for trying to push past a miner and climb a 20-story, earth-moving crane.

Prison population to have first drop since 1972

DALLAS (AP)—The United States may soon see its prison population drop for the first time in almost four decades, a milestone in a nation that locks up more people than any other.

The inmate population has risen steadily since the early 1970s as states adopted get-tough policies that sent more people to prison and kept them there longer. But tight budgets now have states rethinking these policies and the costs that come with them.

"It's a reversal of a trend that's been going on for more than a generation," said David Greenberg, a sociology professor at New York University. "In some ways, it's overdue."

The U.S. prison population dropped steadily during most of the 1960s, and there were a few small dips in 1970 and 1972. But it has risen every year since, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

About 739,000 prisoners were admitted to state and federal facilities last year, about 3,500 more than were released, according to new figures from the bureau. The 0.8 percent growth in the prison population is the smallest annual increase this decade and significantly less than the 6.5 percent average annual growth of the 1990s.

Overall, there were 1.6 million prisoners in state and federal prisons at the end of 2008.

In the past, prison populations have been lower when drafts were enacted, including during World War II and the wars in Korea and Vietnam.

"People who go to war are young men, and young men are the most likely to get arrested or prosecuted," said James Austin, president of the JFA Institute, a research organization that advises states on prison issues.

The ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan haven't involved in a draft.

Instead, the economic crisis forced states to reconsider who they put behind bars and how long they kept them there, said Kim English, research director for the Colorado Division of Criminal Justice.

ACROSS THE NATION

Against nudity ban, Ore. gallery takes it all off

ASHLAND, Ore. (AP)—A city council member in an Oregon town noted for its Shakespeare festival and its occasional dustups over public nudity plans a showing in his art gallery of nude portraits and conceptual art involving naked people. For gallery-goers as well, clothing will be optional—even though it's winter in Ashland, a small college town on the California border Council member Eric Navickas is opposed to a possible ban on public nudity in the town. Nudity is legal in Ashland, except in the city center and public parks, where people are required to cover their genitals. "We feel that the nude ban is not only an attack on freedom of expression but also an attack on the human body itself," Navickas said. "We wanted to have a show to celebrate the nude body and differentiate the nude body from anything indecent."

Too cold for nude protest, NYC bikers switch gears

NEW YORK (AP)—Bicyclists who planned to go topless to protest the removal of a Brooklyn bike lane switched gears Saturday, pinning plastic breasts to their jackets as they rolled into a snowstorm. Dozens of bikers joined a protest called the "Freedom Ride" to oppose the removal of a bike path in Williamsburg, an Orthodox Jewish neighborhood. But the fierce snowstorm in New York kept them from pedaling topless as planned. The hipster cyclists blame Mayor Michael Bloomberg for the loss of the lane because Williamsburg's Hasidic Jewish residents "can't handle scantily clad women" on wheels, said bike messenger Heather Loop, who organized the action. The bikers' tactics did not amuse some faithful Hasids leaving synagogue services with their families on the Sabbath. They rushed home.

Friend defends husband of missing Utah woman

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—A friend is speaking out in support of Josh Powell, the man police consider the sole person of interest in the disappearance of his wife nearly two weeks ago. Wayne Hamberg of Salt Lake City said Josh and Susan Powell had problems like any other couple, but he never saw any signs of domestic violence or serious issues. He said the media shouldn't convict Josh Powell, and he disagrees that his friend has been evasive in television interviews. "Everyone has beaten on him so badly, including his family. He's on functional shutdown. He's emotionally shook up. The only thing he's holding on to is his kids," Hamberg told the Deseret News.

Asia

Suspect faces prosecutors for RP massacre

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The main suspect in the Philippines' worst political massacre, wearing a bulletproof vest and handcuffs, was pushed by guards through an angry crowd Friday to appear at a preliminary investigation hearing.

Dozens of Filipino journalists, whose 30 colleagues were among 57 people killed in southern Maguindanao province on Nov. 23, jeered Andal Ampatuan Jr. outside the Justice Department building in Manila and shoved pictures of the victims' mutilated bodies in his face. At the hearing, he sat between two security officers, one of whom was armed with an assault rifle.

Ampatuan was slightly injured as photographers and cameramen surged toward him as he was led to a security vehicle after the 45-minute hearing.

ABS-CBN television showed a camera being jabbed at his face, the lens hitting his forehead moments before he was shoved into the car. Footage of his arrival at his detention cell showed a small bump and a bloody cut where he was hit.

Ampatuan, the only suspect indicted in the attack so far, has been charged with 40 counts of murder. He has denied involvement.

State prosecutors called the hearing to receive additional complaints and evidence from investigators and victims' relatives against Ampatuan and 160 other people, including his father —clan patriarch Andal Ampatuan Sr. — as well as several brothers, police officers and government-armed militiamen who allegedly took part in the massacre.

The victims were traveling in a convoy led by the family and supporters of the Ampatuans' election rival when they were stopped, led to a grassy hilltop several miles (kilometers) away and killed.

The massacre prompted President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to crack down on the Ampatuans, her political allies who have ruled the impoverished province for years. They were expelled from the ruling party days after the killings.

Troops and police have recovered hundreds of firearms at or near Ampatuan properties, including mortars and heavy machine guns and enough ammunition for a battalion. Authorities have accused the Ampatuans of fomenting a rebellion in the province they control to avoid arrest.

AP

Andal Ampatuan Jr., the principal suspect in the killing of 57 people including 30 journalists, reacts as he is escorted to the Department of Justice for the preliminary investigation Friday, Dec. 18, 2009 in Manila, Philippines.

New Afghan Cabinet list draws ire from legislators

KABUL (AP)—Afghan legislators complained that several members of President Hamid Karzai's proposed Cabinet are inexperienced and beholden to warlords - opposition that threatens to slow the reform Washington believes essential to beating the Taliban.

The U.S. Embassy made only neutral comments after the nomination list was presented Saturday to parliament, but gave no assessment of the nominees, some of whom are known to be favored by Washington and its allies. The embassy appeared to want to avoid the appearance of interfering in formation of a new administration. Britain, another major troop contributor and advocate of reform in the government, issued a more positive assessment.

Karzai's list was seen as a litmus test of his commitment to cleaning up corruption in his government, anger over which fuels the Taliban insurgency. The Afghan leader has come under mounting criticism over his stewardship since the fraud-marred August election and the decision by President Barack Obama to send 30,000 more troops to try to break the Taliban momentum.

In response to the pressure, Karzai kept U.S. favorites in several posts critical to the war and reconstruction—including the ministries of defense, interior and finance—and jettisoned the heads of two ministries embroiled in corruption probes. About half of the 23 nominees are holdovers.

But many of the new names appeared aimed at satisfying domestic political allies, including warlords, who have kept him in power. Many legislators regarded the new figures suspiciously, concerned they would disregard national interests to do the bidding of those regional power bosses, who are widely reviled for their brutality in the 1990s civil war and who still hold significant power in their regions.

"I think that if this Cabinet gets a confidence vote from the parliament of Afghanistan, it would not be able to put medicine on the injuries of the Afghan people," said Gul Pacha Mujedi, a parliamentarian from Paktia province.

Thousands of Taiwanese protest China envoy's visit

TAICHUNG, Taiwan (AP)—Thousands of anti-government protesters gathered in the central Taiwanese city of Taichung for a massive rally Sunday to denounce the arrival of China's senior Taiwan negotiator.

Buoyed by a strong showing in local elections earlier this month, the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party is seeking to press home its message that President Ma Ying-jeou's tightening of commercial ties with China is undermining Taiwan's de facto independence and threatening the economic well being of its people.

Sunday's rally, a day ahead of the arrival of Chen Yunlin, is expected to attract some 100,000 demonstrators. DPP Chairwoman Tsai Ing-wen has promised it will be peaceful - unlike last year, when DPP supporters and police clashed repeatedly during an earlier Chen visit.

Police have sealed off roads surrounding Chen's hotel to ward off protesters, some of whom say they will follow him wherever he goes.

Chen is coming to Taichung to sign four new economic accords between the once bitter rivals, which split amid civil war in 1949, and ever since have eyed each other warily across the 100-mile- (160-kilometer-) wide Taiwan Strait.

He is set to return to China on Dec. 25.

Since taking office in May 2008, Ma has eased cross-strait tensions to their lowest level in 60 years, turning his back on his DPP predecessor's pro-independence policies amid a welter of business-boosting initiatives.

These include launching regular air and sea links between the sides and ending across-the-board restrictions on Chinese investment in Taiwan—precursors, Ma says, to a partial Taiwan-China trade agreement meant to be signed next year.

Taiwan's powerful business community strongly favors Ma's approach, seeing it as necessary to prevent the island's economic marginalization amid growing trade ties between Beijing and neighboring Asian countries.

Washington also supports it enthusiastically. Despite shifting its China recognition from Taipei to Beijing in 1979, it remains Taiwan's most important foreign partner and fears being drawn into the armed conflict that Beijing threatens would follow any opposition move to formalize Taiwan's de facto independence. It sees Ma's policies as strongly reducing that possibility.

Major earthquake strikes Taiwan; 14 injured

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP)—A powerful earthquake off Taiwan injured 14 people and caused minor damage in the capital as well as near the epicenter, an official said Sunday.

All 14 victims sustained minor injuries in the eastern city of Hualien, 85 miles (135 kilometers) southeast of the capital, the official from Taiwan's National Fire Agency said.

Thirteen became ill after inhaling chlorine gas that leaked from a hotel, and another was hurt by falling debris caused by Saturday's quake, said the official, who declined to be named because he was not authorized to speak to the press.

The U.S. Geological Survey said Saturday the 6.4-magnitude quake was centered off the eastern coast of Taiwan, about 15 miles (25 kilometers) from Hualien. It struck at a depth of about 30 miles (45 kilometers). The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center did not immediately issue any warning.

Buildings shook in the capital for several seconds after the quake struck.

Taipei's subways and the island's high-speed rail service were suspended, local TV reports said.

Earthquakes frequently rattle Taiwan but most are minor and cause little or no damage.

However, a 7.6-magnitude temblor in central Taiwan in 1999 killed more than 2,300 people. In 2006 a 6.7-magnitude quake south of Kaohsiung severed undersea cables and disrupted telephone and Internet service to millions throughout Asia.

ASIAN BRIEFS

North Korea confirms Kim received Obama letter

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea confirmed Friday that its leader Kim Jong Il received a letter from U.S. President Barack Obama, though refrained from divulging its contents. The letter was presented by U.S. special envoy Stephen Bosworth to First Vice Foreign Minister Kang Sok Ju on Dec. 9 during his visit to the North, the official Korean Central News Agency reported in a brief dispatch from Pyongyang. "Leader Kim Jong Il received a personal letter from Barack Obama, president of the United States of America," KCNA said. The report said nothing of the letter's contents. The State Department said this week that Bosworth took Obama's letter to Pyongyang in an attempt to bring North Korea back to six-nation talks aimed at its nuclear disarmament. The U.S. has also yet to announce the letter's contents.

Cambodia sends Uighur asylum-seekers back to China

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP)—Cambodia deported a group of 20 Muslim asylum-seekers back to China, despite protests from the U.S. and the U.N., which rushed people to the airport in an attempt to physically prevent their expulsion. As the Uighurs were put in a compound under constant guard in recent days, exile and rights groups grew increasingly nervous that Cambodia would give in to considerable pressure from Beijing, the Southeast Asian nation's largest foreign investor. The decision to expel them finally was announced on the eve of a visit from Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping. Amnesty International warned the Uighurs could be tortured on their return to China, while analysts and exile groups said the deportation showed widespread problems with the refugee system at large.

Pakistan govt: Ministers who lost amnesty to stay

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Pakistan's ruling party leaders insisted Saturday that they supported the president and would not oust other top government officials after the Supreme Court struck down an amnesty shielding them from corruption charges. The party dismissed talk of any confrontation with the judiciary, but defiant moves by party leaders since Wednesday's sweeping—and popularly hailed—court ruling has so deepened the political turmoil in this nuclear-armed U.S. ally that some analysts gave the government only months to survive in its current form. The escalating tensions threaten to distract Pakistan's leadership just as Washington is ramping up the pressure on Islamabad to widen its offensives against Islamist militants to include groups that threaten Western forces in neighboring Afghanistan.

World

Climate reality: Voluntary efforts not enough

COPENHAGEN (AP)—Around the world, countries and capitalism are already working to curb global warming on their own, with or without a global treaty.

In Brazil more rainforests are being saved, and in Chicago there's a voluntary carbon pollution trading system. People recycle, buy smaller and newer cars, and change lightbulbs.

But the impact of such piecemeal, voluntary efforts is small. Experts say it will never be enough without the kind of strong global agreement that eluded negotiators at the U.N. summit this past week in Copenhagen.

Emissions of greenhouse gases keep rising and so do global temperatures.

Dozens of countries—including the top two carbon polluters, China and the United States—came to the climate talks with proposals to ratchet down pollution levels.

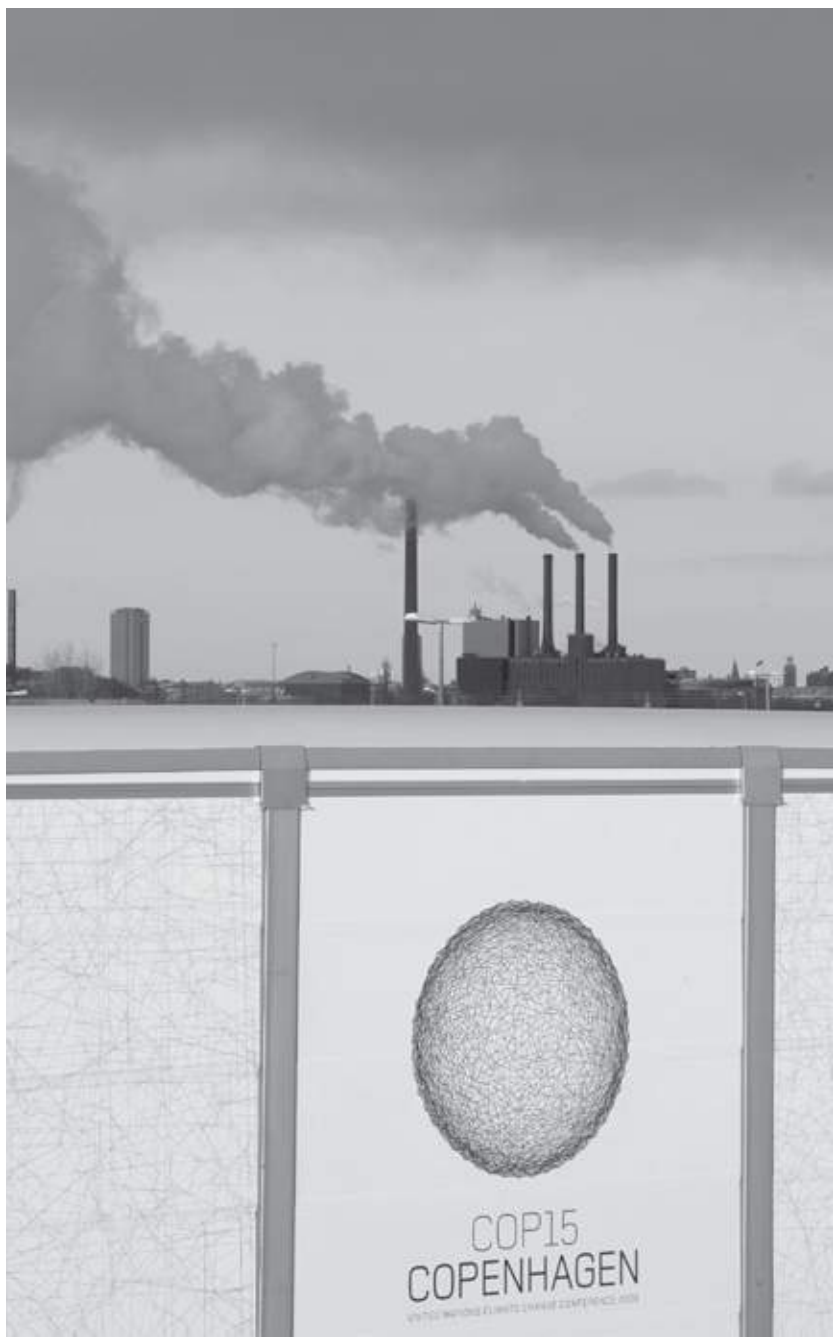
But analysis by the United Nations and outside management systems experts show that those voluntary reductions will not keep temperatures from increasing by more than 1.3 degrees Celsius (2.3 degrees Fahrenheit) compared with now. That's the level that scientists, the United Nations, the European Union and the Obama administration have said the world cannot afford.

Good intentions aren't enough. The deal forged by President Barack Obama with China and several other countries sets up the first major program of climate aid to poorer nations to help them deal with climate change. But it offers few specifics and goes no farther than emissions curbs already pledged. More negotiations are planned for next year.

"It just underlines the heroic effort here that the science says needs to be done; it's not easy," said Alden Meyer, policy director at the Union of Concerned Scientists. "If it were easy, it would have been done. This is a daunting effort."

And no one knew that more than a weary Obama, who 14 hours after arriving in Copenhagen, unveiled the political agreement by saying "more aggressive" emission cuts were needed and so were still-unseen scientific breakthroughs.

"But this is going to be hard," Obama said in a news conference late Friday. "This is hard within countries; it's going to be even harder between countries."



AP

A power plant is seen behind Bella Center, the venue of the UN climate conference, in Copenhagen, Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009.

Climate talks end with eye on next year

COPENHAGEN (AP)—A historic U.N. climate conference ended Saturday with only a nonbinding "Copenhagen Accord" to show for two weeks of debate and frustration. It was a deal short on concrete steps against global warming, but signaling a new start for rich-poor cooperation on climate change.

The agreement brokered by President Barack Obama with China and others in fast-paced hours of diplomacy on Friday sets up the first significant program of climate aid to poorer nations. But although it urges deeper cuts in emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases blamed for global warming, it does nothing to demand them. That will now be subject to continuing talks next year.

As delegates wrapped up an exhausting overnight negotiating marathon Saturday afternoon, to end the 193-nation conference, U.N. climate chief Yvo de Boer assessed the results for reporters.

It's "an impressive accord," he said of the three-page document. "But it's not an accord that is legally binding, not an accord that pins down industrialized countries to targets."

A legally binding international agreement—a treaty—requiring further emissions cuts by richer nations was the goal in Bali, Indonesia, in 2007 when the annual U.N. conference set a two-year timetable leading to Copenhagen.

A new pact would succeed the first phase of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, whose relatively modest emissions cuts by 37 nations expire in 2012. It was hoped a new regime would encompass the U.S., which rejected Kyoto.

But the hopes for Copenhagen faded as 2009 wore on and the first U.S. legislation to cap carbon emissions worked its way only slowly through Congress. Without a U.S. commitment, others were wary of submitting to a new legally binding deal.

Iraq sends forces to oil well seized by Iran

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraq deployed security forces Saturday near a remote oil well seized by Iran, officials said, and its government pressed Tehran to withdraw its forces from the area along their disputed southern border.

U.S. officials applauded Iraq for standing its ground against Iran—an uneasy ally that analysts said was aiming to remind its neighbor of its economic and political pull in its takeover of the oil well Thursday. The site is located in one of the largest oil fields in Iraq and has about 1.5 billion barrels in reserves.

The standoff was a dramatic display of the occasionally tense relations between the two oil-rich nations that fought an eight-year war in the 1980s but now share common ground in Shiite-led governments.

"Again, we ask Iran to be committed to the good relations that they announced with Iraq and its nation, and to withdraw its forces immediately," Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh told Al-Arabiyah TV. "This is the demand of Iraq, and we call Iran to be committed with that."

Iran, however, appeared undeterred.

In a statement, the Iranian military denied it violated Iraq's sovereignty and cited a 1975 border agreement in claiming the oil well as part of Iran's territory.

"Our forces are on our own soil and, based on the known international borders, this well belongs to Iran," the Iranian military said in a statement to Iran's Arabic-language Al-Alam satellite television.

Iraqi army and police reinforcements were sent to a staging ground about a half-mile (1 kilometer) from well No. 4 at the al-Fakkah oil field, according to two Iraqi officials close to the site. Both spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss the issue with the media.

John Paul II moves a step closer to beatification

VATICAN CITY (AP)—Pope Benedict XVI moved two of his predecessors closer to possible sainthood Saturday, signing decrees on the virtues of the beloved Pope John Paul II and controversial Pope Pius XII, who has been criticized for not doing enough to stop the Holocaust.

The decrees mean that both men can be beatified once the Vatican certifies that a miracle attributed to their intercession has occurred. Beatification is the first major step before possible sainthood.

Some Jews and historians have argued Pius should have done more to prevent the deaths of 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. As a result, the German-born Benedict's surprise decision to recognize Pius' "heroic virtues" sparked immediate outcry from Jewish groups.

The Anti-Defamation League and American Jewish Committee said the move was premature given the Vatican still hasn't opened up to outside historians its secret archives from Pius' 1939-1958 pontificate. The Vatican says the 16 million files won't be ready until 2014 at the earliest.

"While it is obviously up to the Vatican to determine who its saints are, the church's repeated insistence that it seeks mutually respectful ties with the Jewish community ought to mean taking our sensitivities into account on this most crucial historical era," said David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee.

Abraham Foxman, a Holocaust survivor and the Anti-Defamation League's national director, said he was disappointed that the pope had taken the decision while the historical jury is still out on Pius' record.

"I can't understand the rush, especially while there are still survivors who are alive who feel the issue very, very deeply and are being told the files need time to be processed. What's the imperative?" Foxman told The Associated Press.

WORLD BRIEFS

2,000 trapped as Eurostar trains break down

LONDON (AP)—More than 2,000 people were stranded beneath the English Channel for up to 16 hours when their Eurostar trains came to a halt in a tunnel, leaving many of them without food, water—or any idea of what was happening. In the end, they all emerged safe on Friday night, but some suffered claustrophobia or panic attacks, and many passengers complained that Eurostar staff members had done little to help them through the ordeal, which forced some to walk part of the dark tunnel, 24 miles (38 kilometers) of which is under water. Eurostar's executives have offered apologies, refunds, free travel and more, but the company has canceled all passenger services through the Channel Tunnel until Monday in a bid to figure out what happened.

Iran acknowledges prisoners were beaten to death

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—After months of denials, Iran acknowledged Saturday that at least three people detained in the country's postelection turmoil were beaten to death by their jailers. The surprise announcement by the hard-line judiciary confirmed one of the opposition's most devastating and embarrassing claims against authorities and the elite Revolutionary Guard forces that led the crackdown after June's disputed presidential vote. There was no immediate public reaction from the opposition, but some activists asserted that authorities under pressure over abuse claims were merely seeking to punish low ranking staff while shielding senior level officials who the opposition says are most to blame.

Poland tightens border in hunt for Auschwitz sign

OSWIECIM, Poland (AP)—Polish authorities stepped up security checks at airports and border crossings and searched scrap metal yards Saturday as the search intensified for the infamous Nazi sign stolen from the Auschwitz death camp memorial. The brazen pre-dawn theft Friday of one of the Holocaust's most chilling and notorious symbols sparked outrage from around the world, and Polish leaders have declared recovering the 5-meter (16-foot) sign a national priority. The sign bearing the German words "Arbeit Macht Frei"—"work makes you free"—spanned the main entrance to the Auschwitz death camp, where more than 1 million people, mostly Jews, were killed during World War II.

Health & Fitness

Too busy for a full workout? Slow down

By VICKY HALLETT
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

Santa manages to wiggle up and down millions of chimneys in a single night, but somehow throughout the holiday season we avoid visiting the gym even once. It's not that we mean to be naughty, but between the stocking-stuffing, candle-lighting and party-hopping, we forget that it's not just the tree that could use some trimming. Besides, there's simply not enough time, right?

Good luck trying that excuse at Exercise Defined, a gym in the District of Columbia with an unusual fitness philosophy: Slow down to work out fast. Clients are advised to come in no more than twice a week for sessions that max out at 30 minutes, which is how long it takes to complete five or six exercises.

"It's referred to as `slow burn' or `super slow.' Twenty seconds would be an ideal repetition. And hopefully, you're not on any one machine for more than three minutes," explains trainer Courtney Manuel, who boasts that she works out only once a week to maintain her toned, size-0 bod. (She, by the way, hasn't seen a drop-off in appointments over the holidays and is booked solid for Christmas Eve.)

The catch — and you knew there had to be a catch — is that although the pace is leisurely, the feeling is anything but. "Nobody that works out here tells you it's fun," she warns before we enter the gym, which looks like a torture chamber from a '70s-era sci-fi flick, thanks to loads of unfamiliar equipment in a white and tan color scheme.

So I'm pleased our first stop is what seems to be a run-of-the-mill lat-pulldown machine. That is, until Manuel sits me down, places a strip of foam across my lap and whips out a seat belt to buckle me in tight. She directs me to put my hands into straps with hooks so that I won't be able to grip the bar, and delivers one last round of instructions: "I want to see continuous movement. As the weight stack goes down, what we want is a slight tap and then a direction change."

On that first rep, I'm focused on pacing and keeping my breathing regular. But by No. 2, it's hard to think about anything other than the burning, which is the idea. By six reps, I'm at muscle failure, so it's time to move on. Next stop is the leg press, where I manage 10 reps before my butt gives up. "Too light!" Manuel declares. And so it goes for a few more machines until my entire body is wiped out.

The next morning, I ring Pete McCall, an exercise physiologist for the American Council on Exercise, to see what he thinks of super slow as a super-fast exercise strategy. "If you're fit and incredibly busy — like a K Street attorney, and you know for the next month you're going to be slammed — it would work," he says. But for most folks, he'd shy away from recommending the program, which can't really be done on your own and isn't "functional," the kind of exercise that prepares you for daily life. (He invokes the saying, "Train slow, be slow.")

However, McCall says anyone crunched for time should pay attention to the intensity of an Exercise Defined workout, since so many people spend hours at the gym without accomplishing much. "You want to have a plan and know exactly what you're doing today. Write it out," he says. Compound exercises (ones such as wood chops that activate the upper and lower body) and circuit training (which raises the heart rate) are his standard suggestions for making the most of a quickie workout. McCall also supports that get-off-the-Metro-a-stop-early trick to walk more.

Another exercise physiologist giving thought to the time issue is Sean Foy, who once counseled clients that there was no point to working out if you couldn't devote an hour to it. "I used to be a `no pain, no gain' guy. I can't believe I used to say that. We just need to move," says Foy, who's written "The 10-Minute Total Body Breakthrough" (Workman Publishing, 2009) to explain his 4-3-2-1 approach to exercise.

It's four minutes of high-energy aerobic training (HEAT), three minutes of resistance training, two minutes of core work and one minute of deep breathing and stretching. That may not sound like much, but for someone new to exercise, it's all Foy would recommend as a start.

HEAT is based on the principles of interval training — think alternating every 30 seconds between marching and jumping jacks, or jogging in place and squat thrusts — which boosts your metabolism more effectively than longer bouts of lower-intensity exercise. It's exhausting, but because it's over so fast, it's not too intimidating. "Feeling confident you can do it is huge," Foy adds.

You go straight from there into the resistance work with your heart rate still elevated, so you get even more out of the strength moves, such as wall squats and push-ups. Then the core segment devotes one minute to your abs and one to your back. "It's the quickest way to change your appearance, because it improves posture," Foy says.

When all you have is 10 minutes, setting aside one for something that doesn't burn calories might sound silly, but Foy says the breathing and stretching portion is key to recovery and relaxation — things we could use a lot more of during the holidays. Plus, it's a way to get a quick rest before starting the circuit again if you can manage a second round. And, oh yeah, for advanced exercisers, he'd like to see you going for four.

"People ask me, `Sean, are you tricking them to do 10 minutes so they'll do more?' Of course I'd love them to do more. But 10 minutes of movement is more activity than most Americans get," Foy says.

And you don't need to wait until you've nursed your New Year's hangover to get started.

Fit gift choices

By JEANNINE STEIN
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

We see a lot of fitness gear, clothing and gadgets—some useful, some fun and some downright weird. So take some advice: When choosing a gift for a loved one this season, think practicality with a dash of indulgence. That doesn't mean said gift has to break the bank, but it should be more exciting than a basic cotton T-shirt or moisture-wicking socks.

Here are picks for some fitness-themed holiday gifts:

■■■

A mat is the most basic piece of equipment in the yoga repertoire and the most necessary. Not all mats are created equal—some provide more stickiness, making it easier to stay on during an especially arduous session, while others are extra-thick to provide more padding.

JadeYoga mats are known for being ultra-sticky, important for power or hot yoga classes, or even any crowded class where room and body temperatures can heat up quickly, eliminating the need for mat towels. Yoga practitioners who are also environmentally conscious will be pleased to know that the mats are made from real rubber, a sustainable resource, or recycled rubber. And, for every mat purchased, the company plants a tree via Trees for the Future. JadeYoga also encourages people to recycle their old mats via its 3R program—Reuse, Reduce, Recycle.

"This is an audience that cares about the Earth and their spiritual well-being," says Pennsylvania-based company founder Dean Jerrehian, a former Environmental Protection Agency attorney. "We have a new feature in our newsletter asking customers what they're doing with their mats in the community, and it's amazing what we're hearing back, like someone teaching yoga to recovering alcoholics and people with HIV."

The mats come in a variety of colors, widths, lengths and thicknesses, and some even have a cool die-cut edge. Kid-size mats are also available.

Price: from about $47.95 to $99.95.

■■■

Swimming endless laps isn't the only way to get fit in a pool. A few inexpensive pieces of gear can offer a great workout by providing flotation or water resistance, which causes the muscles to work harder and the cardiovascular system to ramp up.

Hydro Resistant Arm Trainers from Speedo have a hand grip and provide a great upper body workout as arms move through the water. Use the trainers for individual exercises that target specific muscle groups, such as the triceps and biceps, or simply move them back and forth through water while you are traveling or standing still. Either way, the resistance of the water will tone muscles and increase the heart rate. The material is resistant to pool chemicals.

For the lower body, there's the Hydro Resistant Leg Trainers, which fit around the ankles and use the force of the water to work muscles. The multi-fin design won't encumber movement, and the neoprene cuff that wraps around the ankle is cushioned and comfortable.

Both have a distinctive ergonomic design that enables you to move through the water efficiently but doesn't stress the joints. An oversize grip on the arm trainers, plus wrist stabilization, prevents tired hands and wrists while in the water.

Price: about $29.99 per pair.

■■■

Technology can be a wonderful thing, especially when it comes to creating new fibers. The Shuksan jacket from REI is made from a new fabric called eVent, which allows perspiration to escape, while still keeping out wind (it's windproof to 60 mph). So there's no need for underarm zippers or extra-large gussets to allow for air flow—a big plus when you're working up a sweat. Closed seams also protect against rain. Other features include a helmet-compatible hood, an earphone cord port, and shoulder straps and hip belts that won't get in the way of the two mesh-lined front pockets.

One of the jacket's most outstanding features, however, may be the embedded Recco chip, a small reflector that can be picked up by a signal-emitting detector that is used by hundreds of search and rescue teams and ski areas. It supplements, but doesn't replace, avalanche transceivers.

Price: about $299.

■■■

Headlamps aren't only for hikers and backpackers—people who exercise outside can benefit from a little illumination, too. Runners, walkers and cyclists can also use them to light up their immediate surroundings and as a reflective device for oncoming traffic.

Petzl makes various styles of headlamps, from small and compact models to slightly larger ones with more functions. The e+LITE is one of the company's newer models, and its small size and light weight set it apart from the rest. Although small, its three white LED lights produce a beam that goes to 19 meters as well as a single red LED light that's better for seeing in the dark. There's even a flashing strobe option. Need the light elsewhere? The light can come off the headband, allowing it to be clipped to a belt, bag strap or affixed to a stationary object.

Price: about $29.95.

■■■

The beginning of a run may be cool, but things can heat up quickly when the sun gets high and the sweat starts pouring. A simple T-shirt may be too little, a jacket may be too much. The answer? Brisk Arm Warmers from Lululemon Athletica. (These are designed for women; similar products are available from other companies for men.) Unlike other arm warmers that start at the wrist, these have fold-back "cuffins" that extend over the fingers for especially cold days. They're made from a nylon-Lycra blend and have silicone strips that keep them in place as you move. When the weather shifts, simply scrunch the warmers down.

They could be used for other outdoor activities as well, such as boot camp, in-line skating, even walking the dog.

Price: about $28.

■■■

Perspiration—especially buckets of it—can make a workout uncomfortable. While most people suffer through a long run, bike ride or group exercise class bathed in sweat, the Swiftly Tech T-shirt from Lululemon Athletica for women is all about keeping cool. It has built-in mesh panels that allow air to flow, plus X-static silver fibers that are antimicrobial and antistatic—way more high tech than most workout gear. What's so special? In short, this shirt has it all. Seam-free construction means no chafing, especially good for long runs and epic-length spinning classes. It conforms to the body without being too tight, which is a nice compromise.

Price: about $58, available online and in stores.

Life & Style

Book explores evangelical monopoly in sports world

BOSTON (AP)—A toss left, a quick break past the defense, and it was obvious Philadelphia Eagles running back Herb Lusk was headed to the end zone. The real surprise came when he arrived 70 yards later.

Lusk dropped to a knee in the NFL's first public end zone prayer.

High-profile expressions of faith by athletes have become routine in pro sports since Lusk's October 1977 run. A new book by religion writer Tom Krattenmaker explores how it happened, and asks whether it's a good thing.

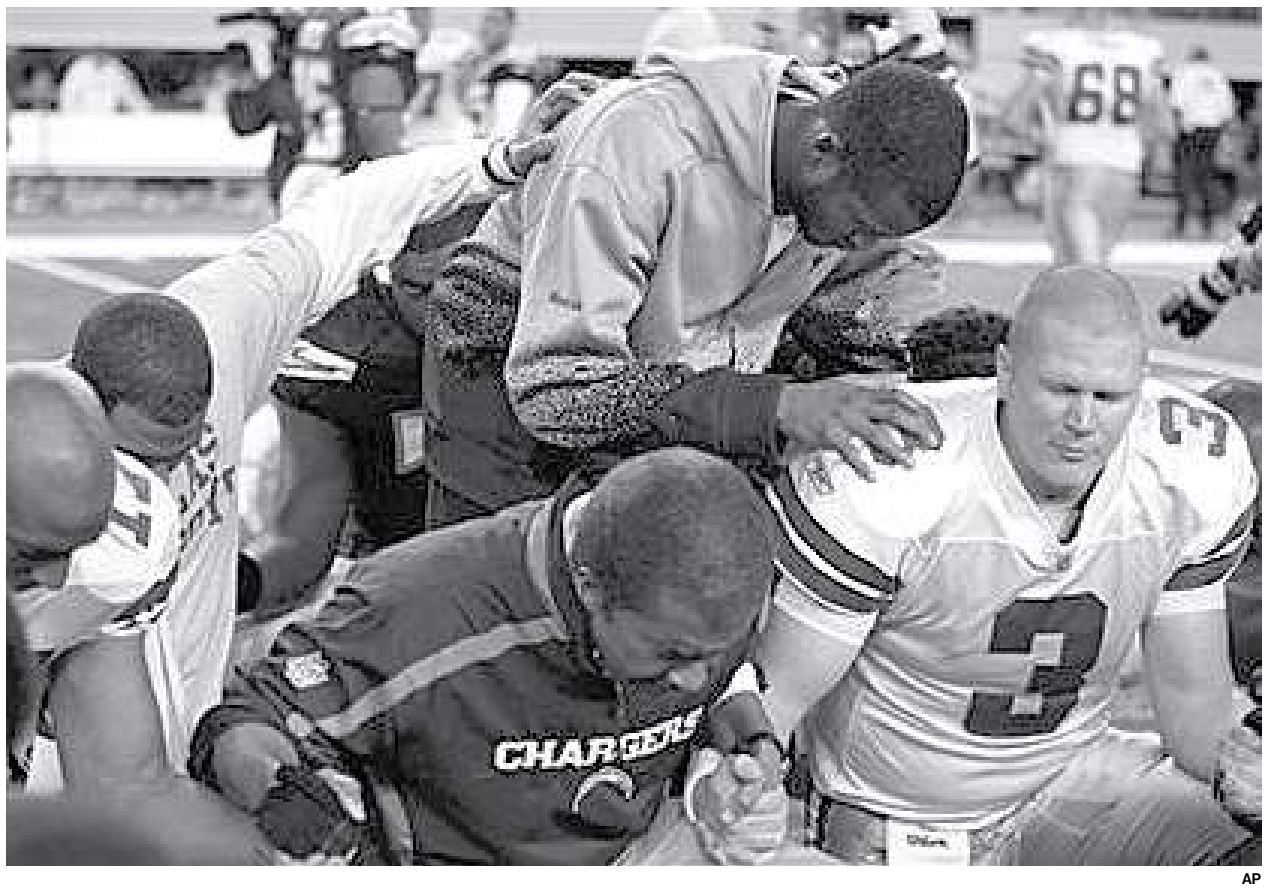
"Some love it, some really resent it. The comedians have a field day with it," said Krattenmaker, author of "Onward Christian Athletes."

From the numerous Lusk copycats, to prayer circles at the 50-yard line, to jubilant players praising God in postgame interviews, an often conservative voice of the Christian faith is now commonplace in American professional sports. That reflects decades of influence by evangelical Christian groups in locker rooms and a belief among some Christian athletes that their visibility is a gift they should use to proclaim their faith.

Krattenmaker says the problem is that they're reaching a sporting public with increasingly pluralistic religious convictions, or no religion at all.

"There are many secular fans who really feel annoyed by that kind of religious expression," he said in an interview. "Even people who are religious themselves often resent this situation where athletes talk about God in this big moment of victory, sometimes seeming to imply God gave them the victory."

But Tennessee Titans All-Pro center Kevin Mawae said his Christianity is part of who he is, and he can't separate it from his life as an athlete or anywhere else.



AP

This is a Dec. 13, 2009, file photo showing Dallas Cowboys quarterback Jon Kitna (3) leading others in prayer following an NFL football game against the San Diego Chargers, in Arlington, Texas.

"The fact that some people are jaded toward religion or faith shouldn't stop a player from expressing his faith in public," Mawae said.

There's no intent to alienate people, only to share Biblical truth, said Vince Nauss, president of Baseball Chapel, which provides chaplains to every major league baseball team.

"If there's an exclusivity, it's because Jesus put it out there," Nauss said. "So I don't think there's anything to apologize for, or to dance around in a politically correct environment."

The influence of Christianity in locker rooms can be traced to people such as baseball pioneer Branch Rickey, the executive who brought Jackie Robinson to the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1954, Rickey agreed to help college football coach Don McClanen found the influential Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Baseball Chapel was established for players like ex-New York Yankee Bobby Richardson, who was mobbed at local churches on Sundays, Nauss said. By 1975, it had established programs for every major league team.

Another prominent group, the international sports ministry Athletes in Action, places about half of the NFL's chaplains.

Krattenmaker said evangelical ministries have a near monopoly in pro clubhouses because they seized the chance, then won the teams' trust by not exploiting their access. Other faith groups simply haven't done the work, he said.

"The conservative Christians got their upper hand in the sports world the old fashioned way," Krattenmaker said. "They earned it."

Krattenmaker isn't asking pro athletes to stop talking about religion, just to be more sensitive in their tone and timing. He also sees a credibility-bruising selectivity in the theologically and politically conservative messages evangelicals in sports trumpet.

In his book, for instance, he highlights retired Indianapolis Colts coach Tony Dungy's public stance against same-sex marriage. But Jesus's teaching that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God" doesn't get much attention among hyper-wealthy athletes, he said.

Joe Price, author of "Rounding the Bases: Baseball and Religion in America," said evangelicals are driven by a unique "missionary urgency" to fulfill Christ's call to spread the Christian message to all nations. But he said spontaneous witnessing on TV broadcasts was akin to "early Christian preaching on a street corner," and can be easily resented or ignored.

Retired NBA guard and 1993 Heisman Trophy winner Charlie Ward, an outspoken Christian, said when athletes publicly talk about Christianity, it's often just a reflection of the joy of the faith.

"When people are excited about something, they want to share good news with people," Ward said.

John White, who helped found Athletes in Action's sports ethics center, advocates training to help Christian pro athletes be reflective about what they say and aware of how their audience might respond.

Book: Prosecutors were prepared to indict Clintons

NEW YORK (AP)—Prosecutors investigating Bill and Hillary Rodham Clinton were prepared to seek indictments of them for their roles in the Whitewater and Monica Lewinsky affairs, an explosive new book about the former president's scandals charges.

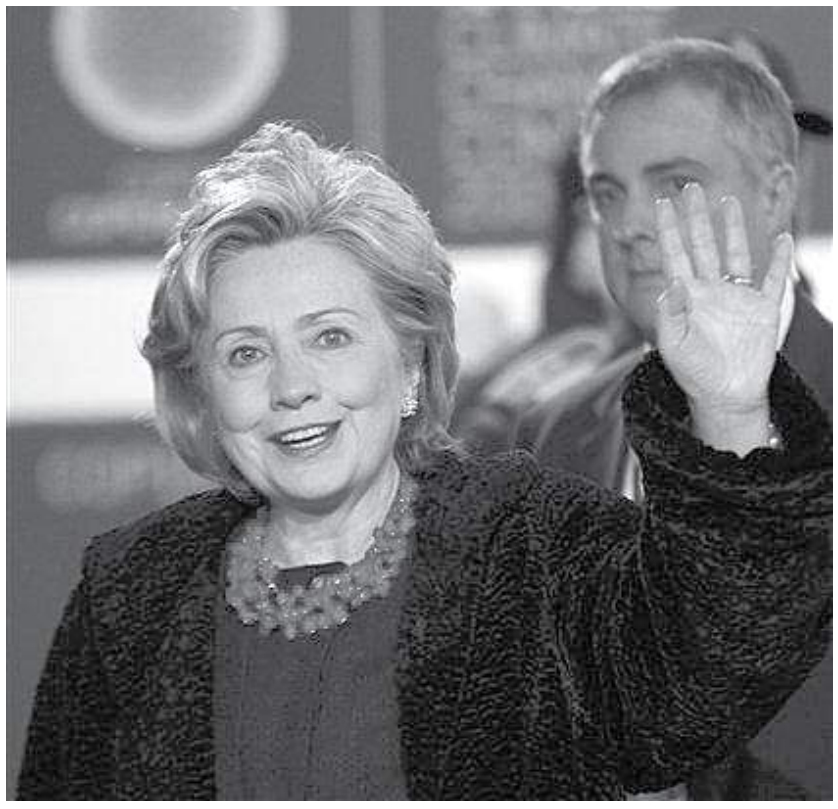
In "The Death of American Virtue: Clinton vs. Starr," due out in February, author Ken Gormley also says that Lewinsky believed Bill Clinton lied about their affair during grand jury testimony about his relationship with the White House intern.

The Associated Press on Friday obtained a copy of the book by Gormley, a Duquesne University law professor, about the scandals that enveloped the final years of the former president's second term. Excerpts from the book were first reported Thursday on the Politico news Web site.

Calls seeking comment from now-Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and the former president's foundation weren't immediately returned Friday.

Gormley didn't return AP calls seeking comment; his publicist, Penny Simon, said Friday Gormley wouldn't speak about the book until its Feb. 16 release.

Former independent counsel Kenneth Starr's office spent millions in the 1990s on a probe of Clinton's affair with Lewinsky and efforts to cover it up, which led to the president's impeachment by the House. Starr's five-year probe also investigated the Clintons' Whitewater business dealings, the suicide of deputy White House counsel Vincent Foster, firing of White travel office workers and charges that White House officials misused FBI files.



AP

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton waves as she arrives at the Bella Center for the plenary session of the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen, Friday, Dec. 18, 2009.

After Starr left office, his successor, Robert Ray, sent a message to the ex-president that he was prepared to prosecute Bill Clinton. The books says Ray "took steps to instill the fear of God in the White House."

"I wanted them to know I was coming," Ray said. "I was fully of the view that if I was not prepared to carry out the threat, it wasn't worth making."

Lewinsky told Gormley that Clinton lied in grand jury testimony about the sexual affair they had.

"There was no leeway on the veracity of his statements because they asked him detailed and specific questions to which he answered untruthfully," Lewinsky said this year, according to the book.

Starr prosecutors in 1998 proposed to formally indict Hillary Rodham Clinton on charges she and a former law partner lied about her business dealings with Madison Guaranty, a failed savings and loan connected to friends James and Susan McDougal, Gormley wrote.

The indictment was drafted against Clinton and Webster Lee Hubbell to be filed in Arkansas federal court, the book said.

"Yet the consensus was that any effort to prosecute Mrs. Clinton would be extremely risky," Gormley wrote. Prosecutors believed that "getting an Arkansas or a Washington grand jury to indict the First Lady seemed like a long shot." Starr prosecutors instead decided to focus efforts on charges against the former president, the book says.

In a deal with prosecutors on his last full day as president, Clinton acknowledged that he gave false testimony in the Lewinsky scandal, heading off the threat of indictment. As part of the deal, the president said he gave false answers in a January 1998 deposition, but he insisted he didn't do so knowingly, an important element of the crime of perjury.

ABC News' Charles Gibson signs off after 34 years

NEW YORK (AP)—Charles Gibson has signed off for the last time from the ABC News anchor desk. He brings 34 years at the network to a close with Friday's edition of "ABC World News."

He called the job he's leaving "a labor of love."

Since joining ABC in 1975, he served two stints as co-host of "Good Morning America," was an anchor of the "Primetime" newsmagazine, and tackled numerous assignments as a correspondent. He had anchored "World News" since 2006.

The 66-year-old Gibson announced his intention to retire several months ago.

On Monday, his former "Good Morning America" co-host Diane Sawyer will take over anchor duties at "World News" in what is planned as a low-key transition.

Gosselin divorce final; Kate gets house and kids

PHILADLELPHIA (AP)—Jon and Kate Gosselin officially divorced Friday after 10 years of marriage, eight children and a year of tabloid headlines.

Kate Gosselin gets the family home in eastern Pennsylvania in the no-fault divorce agreement, according to her lawyer, Mark Momjian. She will also continue as the primary caretaker of the reality TV couple's 9-year-old twins and 5-year-old sextuplets.

"Divorce is always a difficult process, and in this case there's obviously the added challenge of being a celebrity and having to deal with the reality of such a large family," Momjian told The Associated Press. "But I know she is very excited about restructuring her life and looking forward to the new year."

Jon's lawyer, Mark Jay Heller, was traveling Friday and not available for comment, a spokesman said. The divorce agreement was first reported by TMZ.com.

The Gosselins—he is 32, she is 34—worked out custody arrangements themselves but let an arbiter decide financial issues, Momjian said.

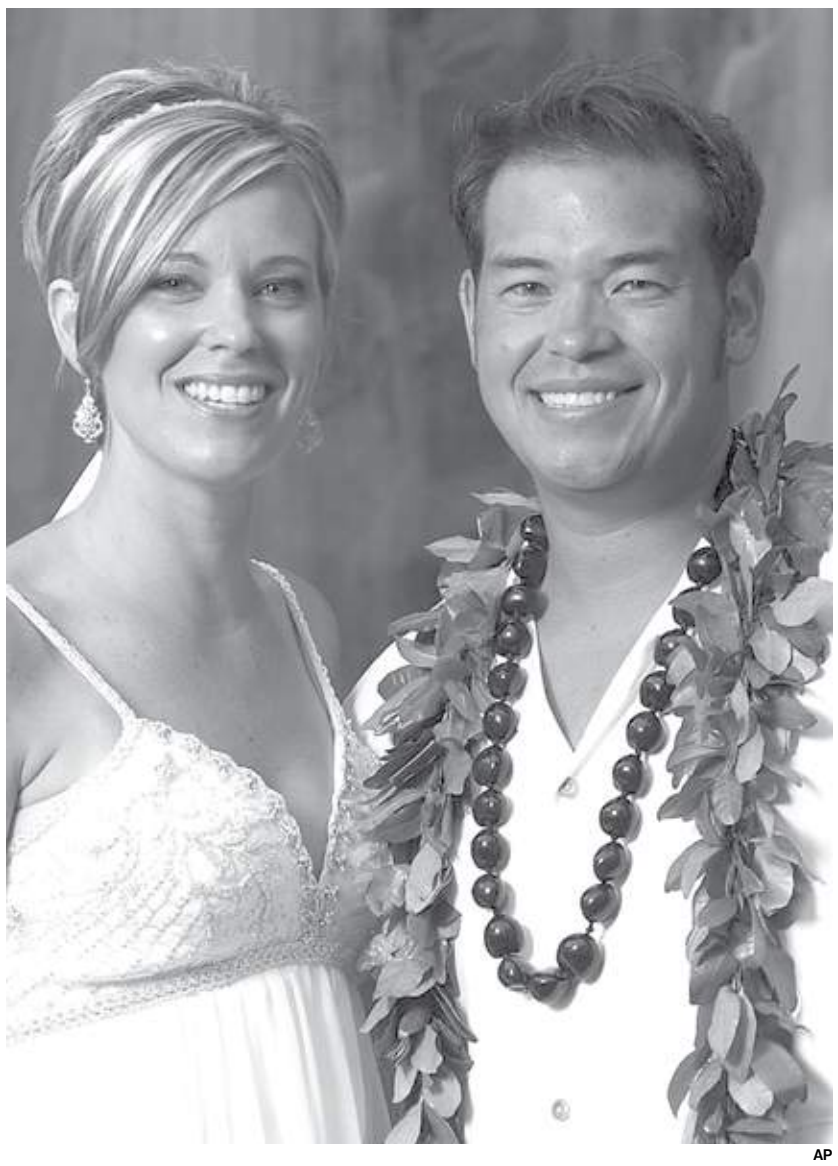
They filed for divorce in June, the same month they told viewers of TLC's "Jon & Kate Plus 8" about the split in an episode seen by more than 10 million people.

At the time, the Gosselins said the show had been a good thing for both them and their children, and they denied it played a role in their divorce. However, Jon Gosselin later insisted that the network stop filming his children, thwarting plans to segue the show into "Kate Plus Eight" and focus on her role as a single parent.

TLC has said it is developing a show for her that could debut this spring. Details have not been disclosed.

The network, meanwhile, has sued Jon Gosselin for breach of contract over allegedly paid appearances on rival networks, as well as over other issues.

The couple spoke on their show of plans to take turns with the children in their sprawling new home in Wernersville, about 50 miles northwest of Philadelphia. However, Momjian declined to say whether that remains the plan.



AP

This image released by TLC, shows Jon Gosselin, right, and his wife Kate Gosselin, from the TLC series "Jon & Kate Plus 8," in Hawaii.

"This is her home now," Momjian said. However, he added, "she clearly wants the children to be involved in both parents' lives."

In a statement issued by her lawyer's firm, Kate Gosselin called the marital breakup difficult.

"I am very relieved that our divorce has been finalized, and I look forward to the new year, focusing on the children," said Kate Gosselin, a former nurse. "This has been a challenging transition for all of us."

Momjian called Kate Gosselin "a very responsible parent."

"She is fully confident that the children's needs, both financially and emotionally, are being taken care of," he said.

The final "Jon & Kate Plus 8" episode aired Nov. 23 and showed the parents taking their children on separate outings.

Flying Chihuahuas: Dogs change coast in big exodus

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Chihuahuas have been flying out of California since other states learned about the glut of little dogs in the Golden State.

A group of 25 dogs has already arrived at the Humane Society for Greater Nashua in New Hampshire, thanks to "Grey's Anatomy" actress Katherine Heigl, Kinder4Rescue in Studio City and American Airlines.

A group of 43 will leave for New Hampshire Monday or Tuesday, said Kathy Davis, interim general manager of Los Angeles Animal Services, who took part in a news conference Friday to announce Project Flying Chihuahua. They were supposed to leave Saturday morning, but bad weather in the east caused a delay, she said.

The Nashua shelter found homes for the first 25 and had a waiting list of 100 people, Davis said.

Heigl's foundation has paid the discounted airfare for all 68 dogs so far, she added, and new donors for more flights were being sought.

Virgin America will be flying a group of Chihuahuas to New York City from San Francisco on Tuesday, said Gail Buchwald, senior vice president overseeing the ASPCA adoption center in New York City.

They will be processed and should be available for adoption on Dec. 29, she said.

Buchwald said she didn't know how many to expect, but each dog will be escorted by a volunteer and Virgin will provide travel for both dogs and humans.

The airline is also expected to offer a week of half price trips to passengers willing to escort an animal to New York, but details have yet to be finalized, Buchwald said.

A call to a Virgin America representative was not immediately returned Friday.

Dozens of dogs have been sent by Oakland Animal Services to nearby states like Washington, Oregon and Arizona, but most of them were delivered by SUV, director Megan Webb said, because there wasn't enough money to fly the dogs to more distant states.

The Chihuahua crisis in California developed as Hollywood featured the dogs in movies like "Beverly Hills Chihuahua" and "Legally Blonde," they became constant companions to the rich and famous, backyard breeders saw a chance to make hundreds of dollars a dog and the recession forced some dog owners to abandon their pets.

California shelters soon found that Chihuahuas made up 30 percent or more of their dog populations.

Meanwhile, Buchwald said, there has long been a severe shortage of small dogs in the east.

AP

Chihhuahua dogs are prepared for transport at the Northeast Valley Animal Care Center, in Mission Hills, Calif., on Friday, Dec. 18, 2009.

Beyonce's mother Tina Knowles files for divorce

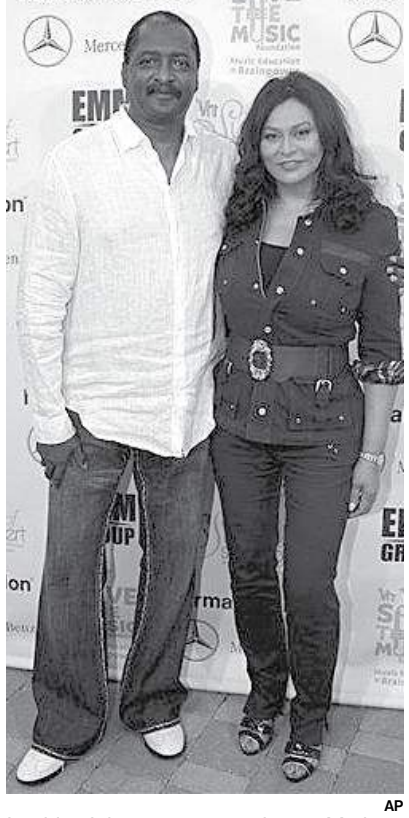
HOUSTON (AP)—Beyonce's mother, Tina Knowles, has filed for divorce from the pop diva's father and manager, Mathew Knowles. Tina Knowles began legal proceedings Nov. 11, according to documents filed with the Harris County Court Clerk. She launched the House of Dereon clothing line with Beyonce in 2006.

"The decision to end our marriage is an amicable one. We remain friends, parents, and business partners," the couple said in a statement provided to The Associated Press on Friday. "If anyone is expecting an ugly messy fight, they will be sadly disappointed. We ask for your respect of our privacy as we handle this matter."

The divorce filing came about a month after Mathew Knowles was named in a paternity suit. Los Angeles resident Alexsandra Wright claims in the lawsuit that he is the father of her unborn child.

Tina and Mathew Knowles wed in 1980. In addition to 27-year-old Beyonce, they have another daughter, 23-year-old singer Solange.

The split was first reported by Bossip.com.



AP

In this July 18, 2008 photo, Mathew Knowles and Tina Knowles arrive at the VH1 Save The Music Foundation Summer of Soul Concert in Watermill, N.Y.

Screenwriter Dan O'Bannon, who wrote `Alien,' dies

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Screenwriter Dan O'Bannon, whose credits include "Alien" and "Total Recall," has died. He was 63.

The Writers Guild of America says O'Bannon died Thursday. His wife, Diane, told the Los Angeles Times her husband died at St. John's Hospital in Santa Monica, Calif., after a 30-year battle with Crohn's disease.

He began his career in 1974 with the science-fiction film "Dark Star," which he co-wrote with director John Carpenter. O'Bannon continued writing sci-fi and horror pictures throughout his career. His credits include "Invaders from Mars," "Bleeders" and "The Return of the Living Dead," which he also directed.

Born Sept. 30, 1946, in St. Louis, O'Bannon earned a film degree from the University of Southern California in 1970.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his son, Adam.

Lil Wayne's Texas concert on after checkpoint stop

LAREDO, Texas (AP)—A Lil Wayne concert in Texas, postponed after authorities said they found marijuana on one of his tour buses, is back on.

The Laredo Entertainment Center's Web site says the show, originally scheduled Friday, will take place Saturday night.

The rapper canceled Friday after two of his buses were stopped in Falfurrias, about 80 miles southwest of Corpus Christi.

Border Patrol Supervisory Agent Joe G. Trevino said Saturday Lil Wayne and 11 people with him were briefly detained, and the case was referred to the Brooks County Sheriff's Office.

A sheriff's dispatcher said the sheriff was unavailable for comment.

Lil Wayne, whose real name is Dwayne Carter, will be tried in March on felony drug possession and weapons charges in Yuma County, Ariz.

AP

In this Jan. 30, 2009 file photo, Rapper Lil Wayne arrives on the red carpet for the ESPN Next Big Weekend Super Bowl XLIII party in Tampa, Fla.

Report: Kevin Jonas, ex-hairdresser marry in NY

NEW YORK (AP)—A report says the oldest sibling of pop group the Jonas Brothers and a former hairdresser have married at a French-style chateau in suburban New York.

People magazine reported a heavy snowstorm bore down on Saturday's wedding between 22-year-old Kevin Jonas and 23-year-old Danielle Delesea at Oheka Castle, a 109,000-square-foot estate in Cold Spring Harbor.

The couple told People that the wedding went on as planned. About 400 relatives and friends attended.

Celebrity event planner Michael Russo created a fairy-tale forest theme that included heated white tents with 14-foot trees and crystals made to look like icicles.

Jonas' brothers Joe and Nick served as his best men.

A message left Saturday night for a representative of Jonas was not immediately returned.

AP

In this June 12, 2009 file photo, musician Kevin Jonas of the music group The Jonas Brothers performs on ABC's "Good Morning America" show in New York.

Bundchen reveals name of son with Brady: Benjamin

AP

New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (12) smiles during a media availability at the NFL football team's facility in Foxborough, Mass., Wednesday morning, Dec. 16, 2009.

BOSTON (AP)—The baby boy keeping New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady and supermodel wife Gisele Bundchen awake at night has a name: Benjamin.

The baby was born Dec. 8. But the day after the birth, Brady said he and Bundchen hadn't chosen a name. Word finally came out Friday when Bundchen posted a holiday message on her Web site.

Bundchen revealed the baby's name when she wrote, "Benjamin is a blessing and I could not be happier."

Brady and Bundchen were married in February. Benjamin is Bundchen's first child. Brady also has a 2-year-old son, Jack, with actress Bridget Moynahan.

Brady had joked earlier in the week about how hard it was to sleep with a new baby in the house, saying it was "a little tough early." He added, "It's coming."

LeAnn Rimes' husband files for divorce

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Court records show LeAnn Rimes' husband Deane Sheremet has officially filed for divorce.

The couple announced a divorce was in the works in September, but no paperwork had been filed. Court records show Sheremet filed in Los Angeles on Thursday.

The couple were married in February 2002 and have no children together. The filing cites "irreconcilable differences" for the breakup, and Rimes has been linked with TV-movie co-star Eddie Cibrian for months.

Cibrian filed for divorce from his wife of eight years in August.

Sheremet is seeking spousal support and to have his attorney's fees paid by Rimes, who is a country singer and actress.

The couple have apparently already worked out how to divide their property.

AP

In this April 14, 2008 file photo,sSinger LeAnn Rimes and her husband Dean Sheremet arrive at the 2008 CMT Awards in Nashville, Tenn.

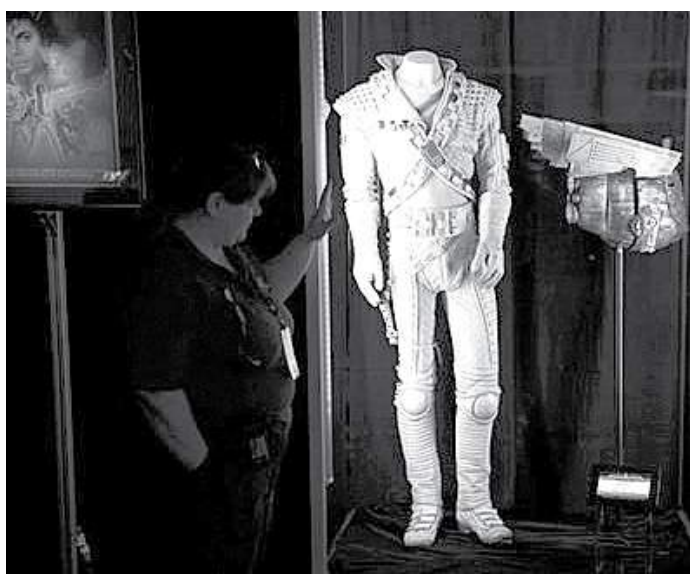
Jackson's 'Captain EO' to return to Disneyland

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"Captain EO" is moonwalking back to Disneyland.

The theme park announced plans Friday to bring back the 3-D sci-fi film starring Michael Jackson next February, over 23 years after the attraction debuted in Anaheim, Calif. The 17-minute film starred the late King of Pop as a singing-and-dancing intergalactic commander. It was directed by Francis Ford Coppola and executive produced by George Lucas.

In the film, Jackson leads a goofy alien and robot crew as they battle a wicked queen played by Anjelica Huston. "Captain EO" originally opened in Disneyland's Tommorrowland in 1986 and ran for more than a decade. Identical versions later opened at other Disney theme parks. They were all closed by 1998.

Jackson died June 25 at age 50.



A costume worn by Michael Jackson in movie "Captain EO" is shown at the D23 Expo in Anaheim, Calif., in this Sept. 9, 2009 file photo.

AP

Mom's candor with kids makes her friends uneasy

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I have two terrific children, ages 6 and 8. I am honest and open with them about everything. For their ages, they are well-informed about sex, drugs and alcohol.

Some of my friends and neighbors have a problem with my children asking questions in front of them, and with me for giving them honest and age-appropriate answers.

I have been told I am giving them too much information and "oversexualizing" and "overeducating" my children. This is not the way I view it. Everything I say is at a level my children can comprehend, and I don't give more details than I need to. My kids know that drugs are bad and how to identify them in order to refuse them. They also know how alcohol and tobacco affect the human body, how babies are "made" and where they come from.

I believe that honesty is a better policy than "wait until you're older and we'll discuss this." Am I right, or are my friends and neighbors correct?

PROACTIVE MOM IN WASHINGTON

DEAR MOM: You are. If children have questions, they should know they can come to their parents for straight answers—regardless of what is being asked. By providing honest information in terms they can understand, you are showing your children that you are open, honest, unembarrassed—and that they can be, too. Good for you!

DEAR ABBY: For 14 years I suffered extreme mental and physical abuse from my parents. It led to chronic depression and self-destructive behavior, until I finally sought the help of a therapist. With talk, therapy and medication, I am finally on stronger footing.

I am 34 now and much better off since I have severed all contact with my parents. My problem is how to convince my aunts that this is what is best for me, and that I am not an "ungrateful daughter" for choosing to have no contact with either parent. I no longer have the energy for their crazy drama. Am I "ungrateful" because of what I have done?

HEALTHIER NOW IN MASSACHUSETTS

DEAR HEALTHIER: No, not considering your family history, and assuming the decision to cut off contact with your parents was made with the help of your therapist. If that's the case, then what you have done is to protect yourself from further emotional abuse.

Do your aunts know what you suffered while growing up? If so, they should clearly understand that you are doing only what you must in order to maintain mental stability. And if they don't, explain it to them, and don't apologize or allow them to make you feel guilty.

DEAR ABBY: I work in an office with more than 30 employees. Two weeks ago an envelope was sent around seeking our mandatory contributions to give gifts to the partners of the office "to show our appreciation."

I was always taught one never "gifts up" the chain of command. I show my appreciation each day by being a good employee. Am I wrong?

BLACKMAILED IN CONNECTICUT

DEAR BLACKMAILED: I don't think so. It appears you and your fellow employees are being ordered to pony up in order to keep your job. And by the way, "mandatory contribution" is an oxymoron.

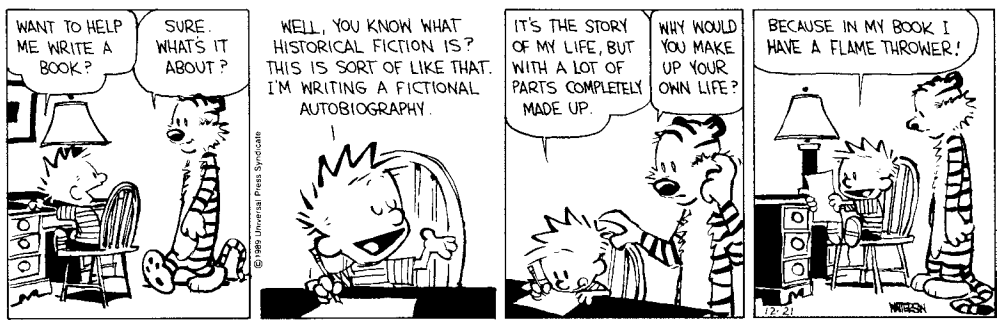
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WANT TO HELP ME WRITE A BOOK?
SURE. WHAT'S IT ABOUT?
WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT HISTORICAL FICTION IS? THIS IS SORT OF LIKE THAT. I'M WRITING A FICTIONAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY.
IT'S THE STORY OF MY LIFE, BUT WITH A LOT OF PARTS COMPLETELY MADE UP.
WHY WOULD YOU MAKE UP YOUR OWN LIFE?
BECAUSE IN MY BOOK I HAVE A FLAME THROWER!
© 1989 Universal Press Syndicate

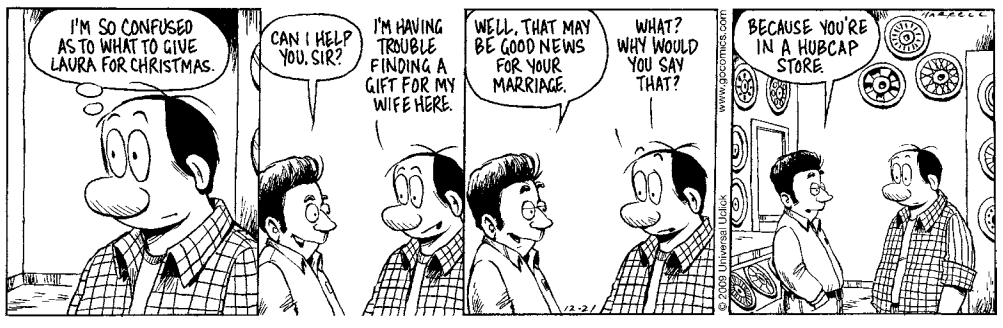
Garfield®

By Jim Davis

HI, GRANDMA! ARE YOU ENJOYING AN OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS?
JIM DAVIS 12-21
www.garfield.com
© 2009 PAWS, INC. All Rights Reserved.
SURE, I'LL HOLD ON
SHE'S LANDING HER HANG GLIDER IN BELIZE
DING!
THE FIGGY PUDDING'S READY!
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

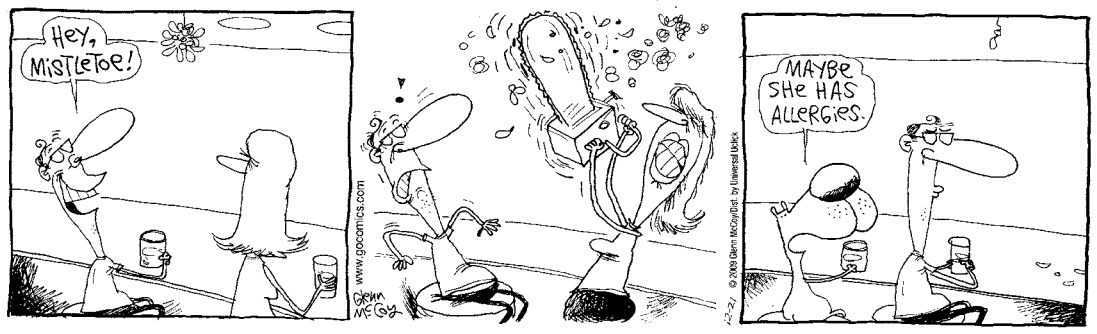
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


I'M SO CONFUSED AS TO WHAT TO GIVE LAURA FOR CHRISTMAS.
CAN I HELP YOU, SIR?
I'M HAVING TROUBLE FINDING A GIFT FOR MY WIFE HERE.
WELL, THAT MAY BE GOOD NEWS FOR YOUR MARRIAGE.
WHAT? WHY WOULD YOU SAY THAT?
BECAUSE YOU'RE IN A HUBCAP STORE.
www.gocomics.com
© 2009 Universal Uclick

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

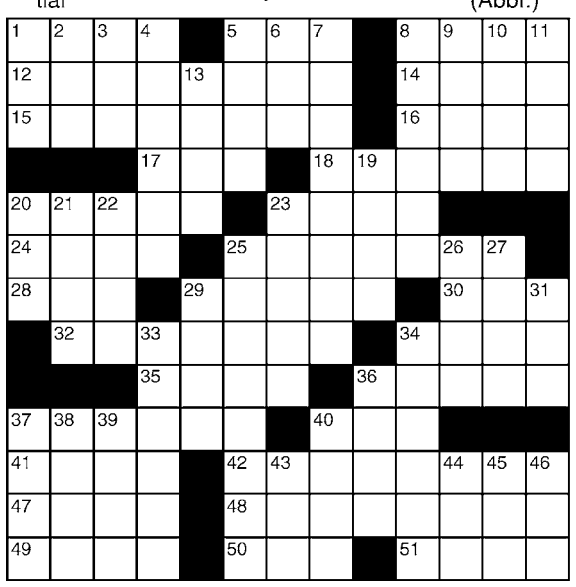
ACROSS
1 Pinza of "South Pacific"
5 "Give — break!"
8 Dweeby type
12 "The View" co-host
14 Old Italian money
15 Source of great wealth
16 Press
17 — Bon Jovi
18 Most recent
20 For a specific purpose
23 Platter
24 Nitwit
25 Tennessee city
28 Right angle
29 Funnyman Jerry
30 Medic, familiarly
32 Compose in print
34 Medal earner
35 Wan
36 Substantial
37 Where originally located
40 Motorists' org.
41 Crucifix
42 Yukon event
47 African antelope
48 Report-card sticker, maybe
49 Break suddenly
50 Computer file suffix
51 Danson et al.

DOWN
1 Early bird?
2 Menagerie
3 Under the weather
4 Goldfinger ally
5 Chicken chow —
6 Compass point suffix
7 "18 or older" provision
8 Snafu
9 Ireland
10 Greek Cupid
11 Philosopher Immanuel
13 University VIP
19 Poisonous snakes
20 Mr. Lincoln
21 Foolish one
22 Sacred
23 One of Donald Duck's nephews
25 Crazy, in Yiddish
26 Concept
27 Kind
29 For fear that
31 Coquettish
33 Settled a debt
34 "Citizen Kane" inspiration
36 Anti-DUI org.
37 Annoys
38 Verb counterpart
39 Carbonated drink
40 "— Well That Ends Well"
43 "Alley-—!"
44 Multipurpose truck
45 Despondent
46 Day fractions (Abbr.)

Solution time: 24 mins.

A	N	E	W	■	A	T	O	M	■	T	O	M
V	E	R	A	■	C	H	U	M	■	A	L	E
O	R	G	Y	■	R	A	T	E	■	C	I	A
N	O	O	N	■	O	I	L	■	L	O	O	T
■	■	■	E	S	S	■	A	N	A	■	■	■
S	A	M	B	A	S	■	W	I	D	G	E	T
A	W	A	R	D	■	■	S	Y	N	G	E	■
P	E	D	A	L	S	■	K	E	E	P	O	N
■	■	■	D	Y	E	■	N	I	L	■	■	■
B	O	D	Y	■	T	W	O	■	A	D	D	S
A	P	E	■	E	T	A	L	■	I	D	O	L
N	A	E	■	V	E	I	L	■	N	A	V	E
E	L	M	■	A	R	T	S	■	E	Y	E	D

Saturday's answer 12-21



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jack Noseworthy, 40; Kiefer Sutherland, 43; Andy Dick, 44; Ray Romano, 52

Happy Birthday: The way you handle others as well as your own needs will determine how successful you will be this year. Taking on too much or being extravagant will work against you. Concentrate on what's important and keep things simple. Put plenty of thought into every move you make; an error will set you back a long way. Your numbers are 4, 11, 19, 24, 29, 33, 40

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Waiting around for others will only cause anxiety and stress. Act now and you will be the one everyone looks to for answers. Once your plans are in motion, you will receive all the help you need. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): You need to relax and spend your time taking care of what really matters. The kindness you show today will be rewarded in a surprising manner. A last-minute change to your financial situation will help you close the year with optimism. ✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You will know instinctively what to do and when. Your insight will be appreciated and will attract someone who will want to work alongside you. An added burden will be placed on you if you are too open about what you have to offer. ✪✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): There is plenty to do to prepare for the upcoming events and bringing the year to a close. Finish off any paperwork. Don't limit the possibilities because you are afraid of failure. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): You may like to please others with lavish gifts and wild entertainment but keep your spending to a minimum. There will be a price to pay if you go over budget. Whoever you are trying to impress will be captured by your charm, not your pocketbook. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Be generous with your time and you will make someone who needs help happy. Your positive and helpful demeanor will bring you plenty of joy now and in the new year. Shop for a special last-minute gift. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't take chances when there is so little time and so much that could go wrong. Pick up last-minute items, make arrangements to volunteer your services or do something to entertain youngsters or seniors. ✪✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Spend time with people you don't get to see that often. Connect with some of the associates you want to do business with in the new year. Don't let someone you have an emotional attachment to make you feel guilty. ✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Get the way you feel and what your intentions are out in the open. An older friend or relative will be a good listener and a wise adviser. Use a gentle nudge with a reward attached to it to get your way. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

COPYRIGHT 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You will receive something special from someone you least expect. Trust your past experience to direct you now. There are a lot of changes coming your way in the new year that you should be preparing for now. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): The more you do to help someone in need, the better you will feel about where you are heading in your own life. You can make a difference to a cause or someone going through tough times. Love is in the stars. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Look at the way you are living and it will become clear to you that with a few healthy changes you can turn any negative in your life into a positive. Don't share your plans just yet; wait until the new year is here. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are inquisitive, curious and ambitious. You are charming and are a leader who plays hard and works hard.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2	9		5				7	3
	8			2			5	
		6	7		3			
		9	1				6	
	3			6			1	
	4				7	2		
			3		5	6		
	5			9			3	
1	6				2		9	4

Difficulty Level ★ 12/21

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Saturday's SUDOKU Answer

5	2	6	1	3	9	8	7	4
3	7	8	5	4	6	1	9	2
9	4	1	7	8	2	6	5	3
4	1	9	3	6	8	7	2	5
2	8	5	4	9	7	3	6	1
7	6	3	2	5	1	9	4	8
1	3	7	6	2	4	5	8	9
6	9	2	8	1	5	4	3	7
8	5	4	9	7	3	2	1	6

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 12/19

©2009 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

THE URAL MOUNTAINS **Solution: 8 letters**

T	F	A	L	A	L	N	S	T	O	N	E	B	L	Z
O	O	A	I	E	I	A	N	D	L	O	G	E	N	T
P	R	S	R	S	C	R	O	A	G	E	K	R	A	R
A	E	N	U	I	S	M	E	C	M	C	B	Y	T	Ⓐ
Z	S	L	T	O	Z	U	I	B	I	F	S	L	Ⓢ	U
T	T	L	K	I	R	M	R	N	I	M	O	Ⓘ	H	Q
A	A	A	R	H	P	E	A	C	E	S	Ⓐ	H	K	N
B	E	C	U	R	C	H	F	G	I	R	O	N	A	R
P	O	N	I	I	A	A	E	I	N	T	A	E	Z	E
N	T	V	K	C	S	N	G	N	N	E	C	L	A	V
O	E	R	I	O	P	E	U	Y	A	O	T	R	K	L
R	U	R	U	T	I	L	E	A	A	K	B	I	A	I
T	R	T	D	N	A	L	S	I	F	V	I	R	T	S
H	H	S	C	I	N	E	G	O	R	O	U	T	A	E
D	E	P	O	S	I	T	N	O	I	S	O	R	E	C

© 2009 Universal Uclick www.wonderword.com 12/21

Aral, Arctic, Asia, Baltica, Belt, Beryl, Carboniferous, Caspian, Coal, Deposit, Ernst, Erosion, Fauna, Forest, Gems, Gold, Hofmann, Hunt, Iron, Island, Kazakhstan, Magnetite, Mineral, Nickel, North, Ocean, Orogenic, Peak, Phenakite, Quartz, River, Russia, Rutile, Siberia, Silver, South, Stone, Topaz, Turkic, Ural, Vaygach, Zircon

Last Saturday's Answer: Jockey

To order THE COLLECTED WONDERWORD, Volume 15, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 or 30, send $5.95 each (US funds only) payable to Universal Uclick plus $3 postage for the first book order. $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to WONDERWORD, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

CLASSIFIED ADS

WHATZIT Solution:
Join the queue

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/ 24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/ students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

2 Bedroom Apartment for Rent.
For $230.00 / month
Koblerville, please call 288-0728

FOR SALE

Pigs for Sale
Good for lechon ($2.50/lb)
Please call 287-4568

share the power of a wish℠
"I want to meet Winnie the Pooh!"
"My wish is to have my own PC with a DVD player and CD burner!"
"When I grow up, I want to become a police officer!"
22 years
of making wishes come true!
For eligible children with life-threatening illnesses
MAKE-A-WISH
Visit us at 865 S. Marine Dr., Orlean Pacific Plaza Ste. 104
Tamuning, Guam 96913
Tel: (671) 649-WISH
Fax: (671) 646-6293
Email: mawfguam@ite.net
www.wish.org
Office Hours: 8:30am to 5:30pm
M-F daily
Saipan Tribune

QQ RENT A CAR
Starting as low as... $25.00
Call: 233-9889 or 483-8866
$100 Security Deposit Required
Please visit QQ Store Garapan (2nd Road behind Fire Station)

TJM Lawn Care Services
WE OFFER
$30.00
per house 500 sqm
(negotiable)
Contact: Tahira S. Miah
Tel: 288-8897
Cel: 287-8896

DRUNK DRIVING
Over the limit. Under arrest.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

THE FINANCIAL & INSURANCE SERVICES GROUP, INC., Plaintiff, -v-. DONALD C. CAMACHO, Defendant. — CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0458 — SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATIONS

TO THE ABOVE-NAMED DEFENDANT:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy of which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of your answer to The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, the Plaintiff's Attorneys, whose address is P.O. Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice. If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judment by default may be taken against you for the relief of demanded in the Complaint.

By order of the above court:

/s/ Deputy Clerk of Court

DATED, this 2nd day of December, 2009:

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CITY TRUST BANK, fka MARIANAS BANK, LTD., Plaintiff, -v-. JUAN R. SABLAN and ANGELINE F. SABLAN, Defendants. — CIVIL ACTION NO. 97-1054 — THIRD AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an order issued by the Court in this matter on November 10, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Real property situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, designated as Lot E.A. 839 NEW-6-3, containing an area of 1,329 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. E.A. 839 NEW.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 15, 2010, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 14th day of December, 2009:

/s/ **MICHAEL A. WHITE**, Auctioneer

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' CREDIT UNION, Plaintiff, -v-. MARIANO S. NAPUTI, Defendant. — CIVIL ACTION NO. 05-382 — THIRD AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an order issued by the Court in this matter on November 13, 2006, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 002 G 334, situated in Kagman II, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 929 square meters, more or less, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 002 G 08, the original of which was recorded May 14, 1990, as document No. 90-1905, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 15, 2010, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 14th day of December, 2009:

/s/ **MICHAEL A. WHITE**, Auctioneer

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

CITY TRUST BANK, Plaintiff, -v-. DANIEL JOSEPH M. CABRERA and MAGDALENA S. CABRERA, Defendants. — CIVIL ACTION NO. 06-0054 — THIRD AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on September 19, 2008, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: (a) Lot No. 005 I 180, situated in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 005 I 02, the original of which was recorded March 11, 1983, as Document No. 16707, at the Commonwealth Recorder's Office, Saipan; and (b) Tract No. 225840-1-1, located in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, as more particularly described on DLS Check No. 2119/92, deeded to Daniel Muna Cabrera on August 24, 1998, and recorded as File No. 99-2096 on September 3, 1999.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 15, 2010, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 14th day of December, 2009:

/s/ **MICHAEL A. WHITE**, Auctioneer

DANILO T. AGUILAR, F0198
Attorney at Law
P.O. Box 505301
First Floor, San Jose Court Bldg.
Cor. Ghiyeghi St. & Wischira Way
San Jose, Saipan, MP 96950
TELEPHONE: (670) 234-8801
FAX: (670) 234-1251

Attorney for Plaintiff
WELLS FARGO FINANCIAL SAIPAN, INC.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

WELLS FARGO FINANCIAL, Plaintiff, FRANCISCO A. DELA CRUZ AND PRICSCILLA B. DELA CRUZ Defendants. — CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0274-CV — ORDER TO APPEAR OR PLEAD (7 CMC § 1301)

TO: Francisco A. Dela Cruz and Priscilla B. Dela Cruz,
THE ABOVE NAMED DEFENDANTS

PURSUANT TO 7 CMC § 1301, YOU ARE HEREBY ORDERED to make your appearance or file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint filed with Commonwealth Superior Court, within 30 days from the service date. You are instructed to make your appearance before the Clerk of Courts or mail a copy of your answer to the Complaint to the Law Office of Danilo T. Aguilar, whose address is P.O. Box 505301, Saipan MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing. You may obtain a copy of the Complaint by contacting Plaintiff counsel of record.

If you choose to file an answer, your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of Court at the Guma Hustisia, Susupe, Saipan, MP 96950. It may be prepared for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of the court by messenger of mail.

If you fail to make your appearance or file an answer in accordance with this Order To Appear or Plead, a default judgment will be entered against you for the relief of the Complaint

A copy of this Order is to be published at a newspaper of general circulation, once a week for two consecutive weeks. In addition, a copy of this Order shall be posted in two (2) conspicuous places for a period of not less than two weeks.

SO ORDERED this 6th day of November, 2009.

/s/ RAMONA V. MANGLONA
Associate Judge

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Guard files sex harassment suit vs principal. PAGE 3
2 hurt in Puerto Rico vehicular crash. PAGE 5
There is still hope for nonimmigrant stat
joins Mic
Subscribe to the CNMI's first daily newspaper.
Call
235- NEWS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

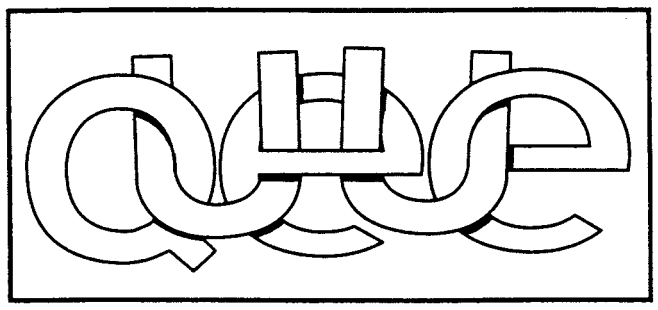
Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.



© 2009 WHATZIT? is a trademark of Paul Sellers
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Find today's solution in this section

Saints lose for first time, beaten by Dallas

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Drew Brees and the New Orleans Saints are marching toward perfection no more.

Tony Romo and DeMarcus Ware helped Dallas end its December doldrums and the Cowboys held off a frenzied rally by the Saints for a 24-17 victory Saturday night.

The loss by the Saints (13-1) left the Indianapolis Colts (14-0) as the NFL's only unbeaten team this season.

"We'll digest this. It'll sting a little bit going down," Saints coach Sean Payton said. "Nonetheless, it is what it is and we've got to get back to work next week. We have two important games in front of us and we'll take that approach."

The high-powered Saints trailed 24-3 going into the fourth quarter, then scored two fast touchdowns. After Dallas kicker Nick Folk watched his 24-yard field goal try clang off the right upright shortly before the 2-minute warning, Brees got a final chance to tie it.

AP

New Orleans Saints quarterback Drew Brees fumbles in the closing seconds under pressure from Dallas Cowboys running back Marion Barber in an NFL football game, Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009, in New Orleans.

Brees quickly moved the Saints into Dallas territory. But on second down, Ware sacked Brees and forced a fumble that was recovered by the Cowboys with 6 seconds left.

"As poorly as we played, we were fortunate just to have that chance on the final drive," Payton said. "But we couldn't get anything going, really."

Romo passed for 312 yards, including a 49-yard touchdown to Miles Austin. Ware returned from a neck injury that left his status in doubt and was part of a relentless Dallas pass rush that pressured Brees all night.

Marion Barber had two short touchdown runs for the Cowboys (9-5), who ended a two-game skid and proved they were good enough to beat the top team in the NFC in front of a charged-up, hostile crowd.

The Cowboys' troubles in December had been well documented—they are 4-8 in the month in three seasons under coach Wade Phillips—but this win provided a dramatic boost to their playoff chances. They'll hold on to a wild-card spot for at least another week.

The Saints did not score a touchdown until Mike Bell's 1-yard run with 12:35 to go. Brees followed by capping a seven-play, 70-yard drive with a 7-yard touchdown pass to Lance Moore with 8 minutes left, cutting New Orleans' deficit to 24-17.

That left it up to the Saints' defense to hold once more. Dallas faced a third-and-7 on its own 23 and the crowd was going so wild Romo had to call timeout a moment before the play clock expired.

The noise was still deafening when Romo returned to the line of scrimmage, but that didn't stop him from finding Austin on a short crossing route for a 32-yard gain. On the next play, Romo spun away from the rush and hit tight end John Phillips for a 23-yard gain to New Orleans' 22. From there, Dallas went conservative and set up what looked to be a game-sealing field goal from nearly the same distance as Shaun Suisham's miss two weeks ago, which allowed the Saints to come back and beat Washington in overtime.

When Folk's kick bounced off the upright, the crowd erupted, sensing the Saints were simply destined not to loose. And it looked that way after Brees converted a frantic fourth down on a pass over the middle to Marques Colston, who made a one-handed catch.

The Saints marched to midfield in the final minute, but the Cowboys held firm. Ware stripped Brees for the second time in the game and lineman Jay Ratliff recovered, silencing the packed Superdome while the Cowboys leapt in the air and embraced one another.

Ware had to be taken to the hospital only a week earlier after what looked like a serious neck injury in Dallas' loss to San Diego. He didn't practice fully all week, but said he was feeling better and was cleared to play. He certainly looked rested and healed.

He sacked Brees twice, forcing fumbles that the Saints' lost both times. The first one set up a field goal that gave Dallas a 17-3 lead at halftime. Linebacker Anthony Spencer also had two sacks.

Very little went right for Brees, who was intercepted once, sacked four times and pressured all night. Even what looked like a certain 36-yard touchdown pass in the third quarter slipped through Devery Henderson's hands in the end zone. Brees was sacked by Spencer soon after and that drive ended with a punt.

The Cowboys outgained the Saints, 439 yards to 336, holding the Saints 90 yards and nearly 19 points below their averages in those categories. The Saints, who came in converting nearly 48 percent of third downs this season, converted only one of seven.

Seattle gets Bradley from Cubs for Silva

SEATTLE (AP)—There are only two people from whom Milton Bradley has ever wanted to get an autograph.

He's about to play with one of them.

"Some of the things that happen in your life and as a baseball player are kind of surreal to you. To play with Ken Griffey is one of those," Bradley said of the Mariners star. "It's an absolute blast for me."

The mercurial outfielder is now Griffey's newest teammate. Seattle acquired Bradley on Friday from the Chicago Cubs for expensive and underperforming pitcher Carlos Silva.

Chicago also received $9 million from the Mariners as part of the swap, which makes Seattle the eighth team of Bradley's 10-year career. Silva has $25 million remaining on his contract and Bradley has $22 million left on his deal.

The dual dumping, which came together in 48 hours, got rid of headaches for each team—yet has the potential of creating new ones in each city.

That other person Bradley has always wanted an autograph from? It's not general manager Jim Hendry, or anyone else associated with the Cubs.

Chicago has been wanting to trade Bradley since the Cubs suspended him for the final two weeks of last season, shortly after he criticized the atmosphere surrounding a team that hasn't won a World Series since 1908.

"I have no interest in talking about Chicago," Bradley said on a conference call. "I've moved on. I wish you would move on. And I wish the Chicago Cubs organization the best."

Hendry said Friday he regrets signing the outfielder to a $30 million, three-year contract. Bradley hit .257 with 40 RBIs last season.

"I bear the responsibility for that not working out," Hendry said during another conference call. "Obviously, in this case, it did not work out how we planned, which was also the reason I sent Milton home. (That's) not going to be tolerated, to treat our fans, teammates and members of the media the way he did.

Silva

Bradley

"It's just time to put it behind us and move forward."

Bradley's reaction: "That's Jim's opinion."

Seattle, which has never appeared in a World Series, didn't expect to find a suitor for Silva. He has done little except lose and get hurt in the two seasons since he signed a $48 million, four-year contract.

Silva won five games in two years with the Mariners. They will now pay more to Chicago to shed the contract second-year Mariners general manager Jack Zduriencik inherited from predecessor Bill Bavasi.

Zduriencik's third splashy move in three days was to add more offense following his acquisition of ace Cliff Lee in a trade with Philadelphia and the signing of infielder Chone Figgins.

Bradley was suspended for one game last season after arguing with umpire Larry Vanover when he was called out on strikes with the bases loaded April 16. That was his first at-bat at Wrigley Field as a Cub.

In June, he got sent home by manager Lou Piniella during a game against the White Sox after he threw his helmet and attacked a water cooler following a pop-out. The Cubs finally decided they had enough in September, after he criticized the team in a suburban newspaper.

"Everything in sports and being a celebrity and what not is about getting a reputation and is about what dirt you can dish or what you can get on someone. The last couple weeks it's become apparent that people aren't necessarily the people that they are portrayed coming from the media," Bradley said.

"(I) understand how PR works and media works. ... how you've got to have a bad guy and you have to have a good guy. That's just the way it is. I'm portrayed however I am. Just adds to the mystique, I guess."

The Mariners repeatedly have proclaimed they want players of high character with good attitudes, citing Figgins as the latest example on Tuesday.

But they also wanted another bat.

"We were in search of a middle-of-the-lineup guy for quite some time," Zduriencik said.

Seattle's GM said he got nothing but good reports on Bradley—who also got that autograph he coveted from Barry Bonds - going back to his minor league career a decade ago.

Zduriencik specifically relied upon the input from two former coaches of Bradley: current Mariners bench coach Ty Van Burkleo, who was with Bradley in Oakland in 2007, and performance coach Steve Hecht, who had the outfielder in Texas in 2008.

The 31-year-old Bradley was an All-Star that year as a designated hitter with the Rangers. He led the AL in on-base percentage while batting a career high-tying .321 during a relatively event-free year. That was followed by the tumultuous season with the Cubs.

"It's a new day, new way for this guy," Zduriencik said.

He said Bradley will likely play left field and perhaps share designated hitter with Griffey on a team that last season went 85-77 following a 101-loss year, and that Seattle is "going to welcome him with open arms."

The 30-year-old Silva missed most of the season with a bad pitching shoulder, after he had devoted himself to yoga and a better diet. He went from 285 pounds to 250, yet was 1-3 with an 8.60 ERA in eight games.

He was 5-18 with a 6.81 ERA in two seasons with Seattle after leaving Minnesota.

"I think this deal helps us in a lot of ways," Hendry said of his Cubs. "Hopefully, Mr. Silva will get back to where he was a few years ago. He was a quality free agent when he left the Twins."

MLB BRIEFS

Source: Red Sox's Lowell to have thumb surgery

BOSTON (AP)—Mike Lowell will have surgery to repair a ligament in his right thumb and need six to eight weeks to recover, a person familiar with the situation told The Associated Press. The diagnosis negates—or at least postpones indefinitely—a trade that would have sent the 2007 World Series MVP to the Texas Rangers. Lowell plans to have the operation after Christmas, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity Saturday night because the Red Sox had not made an announcement. Lowell saw a hand specialist Friday in Arizona and then Rangers team physician Dr. Keith Meister on Saturday. The Rangers declined to comment specifically on Lowell or the potential trade that would have sent catcher Max Ramirez to Boston. Lowell is owed $12 million in 2010, the final season of a $37.5 million, three-year contract, and the Red Sox had agreed to pay as much as $9 million of it.

Reds give 3B Scott Rolen 2-year extension

CINCINNATI (AP)—Scott Rolen agreed Saturday to a two-year contract extension with the Cincinnati Reds that guarantees him an additional $13 million while converting almost half of his 2010 salary to a deferred signing bonus. The deal, which runs through 2012, clears a little bit of payroll room for the Reds and shows how much they value the 34-year-old third baseman as a clubhouse leader. Rolen missed time with a concussion last season, batting .305 with 11 homers and 67 RBIs in 128 games with Toronto and Cincinnati. A seven-time Gold Glove winner and five-time All-Star, Rolen had been due to make $11 million next season, the final one in an eight-year, $90 million deal he got from St. Louis. Instead, he gets a $5 million signing bonus that will be paid over the next three years, a $6 million salary next season and $6.5 million in each of the following two seasons.

Evans' last-second layup lifts Kings over Bucks

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Tyreke Evans made a reverse layup around Andrew Bogut with 0.9 seconds left, lifting the Sacramento Kings to a 96-95 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks in a game that featured the NBA's top two rookies.

Bogut's baseline jumper hit the side of the backboard as time expired, allowing Sacramento to improve to 2-11 on the road.

Evans scored a game-high 24 points to top Milwaukee rookie Brandon Jennings, who had 15 points, nine assists and six rebounds.

Jennings found Ersan Ilyasova under the basket for an easy basket with 5 seconds left, giving the Bucks a 95-94 lead. But Evans took an inbounds pass, drove the lane around Bogut and hit the winning shot.

Jason Thompson scored 22 points—including seven in the final three minutes—and had 10 rebounds for the Kings, who were playing their fourth game in five nights.

Carlos Delfino scored 11 of his 17 points in the fourth quarter for the Bucks.

Neither team led by more than seven the entire game. The lead changed hands seven times in the final two minutes and the star rookies were at the center of the action.

Jennings was fouled with 1 second on the shot clock and made both free throws to give the Bucks a 91-90 lead with 1:05 to go.

Spencer Hawes then scored on a dunk for a 92-91 Sacramento lead.

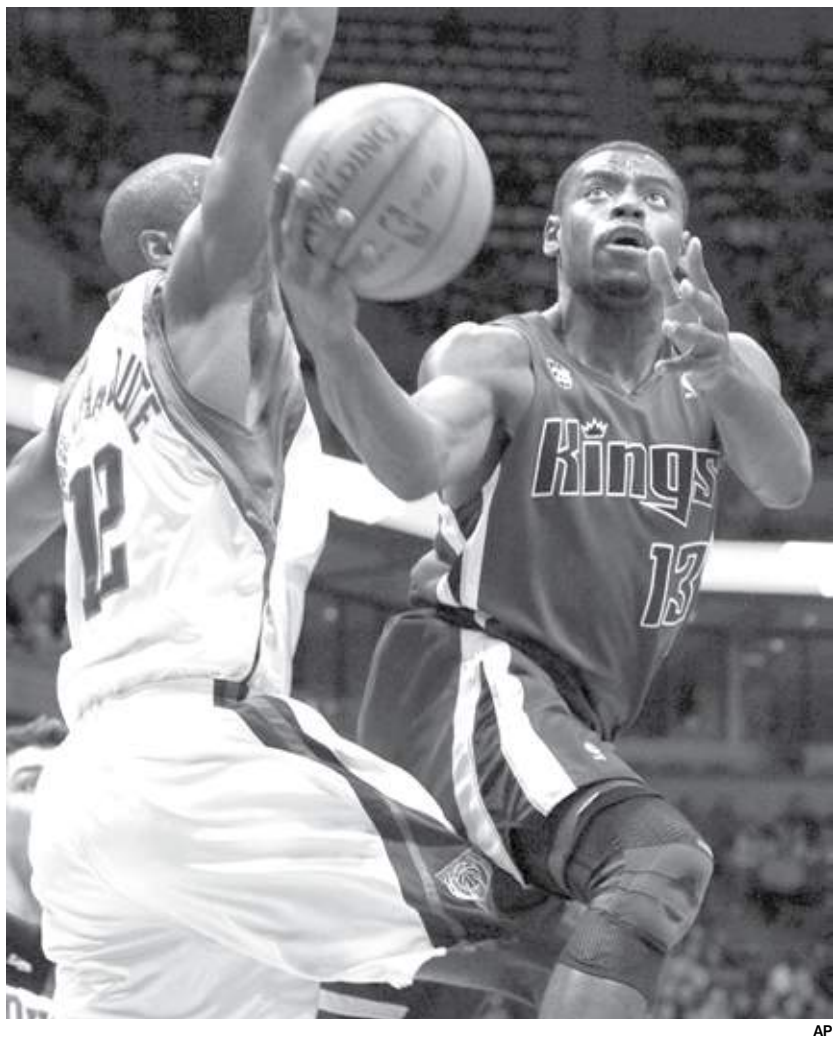
Jennings grabbed a loose ball off the floor and was fouled at the basket, making both free throws to give Milwaukee a 93-92 edge with 20 seconds left.

Thompson took a pass from Evans and scored on a layup with 11.9 seconds remaining to give Sacramento a 94-93 lead.

Beno Udrih hit a running jumper with 2.1 seconds to go in the third quarter, giving the Kings their first lead of the second half, 73-72.

Evans already had 13 points on 5-of-10 shooting before Jennings took his first shot, a 27-foot 3-pointer that hit nothing but net and gave the Bucks a 43-42 lead with 3:22 left in the second quarter.

Bogut scored 13 points in the first half and the Bucks led 53-49 at halftime.



AP

Sacramento Kings' Tyreke Evans (13) goes up for a shot against Milwaukee Bucks' Luc Richard Mbah a Moute (12) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Saturday, Dec. 19, 2009, in Milwaukee.

Magic 92, Blazer 83

In Orlando, the Orlando Magic overcame a sluggish first half to beat the Portland TrailBlazers and reclaim the lead in the NBA's Southeast Division.

Dwight Howard had 12 points, 20 rebounds and four blocks to help Orlando beat Portland for the sixth time in the past seven meetings.

Portland's Brandon Roy had 33 points but the Trail Blazers ran out of energy in the second half, shooting just 34 percent and being outrebounded 54-35.

The score was 76-76 with 6:53 left before the Magic went on an 11-0 run to seize control.

Bulls 101, Hawks 98, OT

In Chicago, Atlanta's six-game winning run was ended in overtime by Chicago.

Derrick Rose scored a career-high 32 points including the tying basket that sent the game to overtime, and then two free throws with 11 seconds left in the extra period to seal it.

The Hawks had a chance to tie it, but Joe Johnson missed a 3-point attempt. Rose got the rebound and missed two free throws with 2.3 seconds left, but Atlanta's inbound pass was blocked to end the contest.

Johnson had a season-best 40 points for the Hawks, who slipped a game behind Orlando in the Southeast.

Rockets 95, Thunder 90

In Houston, the hosts almost blew a 17-point third-quarter lead before steadying to see off Oklahoma City.

Trevor Ariza scored 31 points and hit five 3-pointers for Houston, who have won 10 in a row at home against the Thunder.

Jeff Green led Oklahoma City with 21 points.

Suns 121, Wizards 95

In Phoenix, the hosts made extended their perfect home record to 10-0 by routing Washington.

Steve Nash had 15 points and 15 assists before sitting out the fourth quarter, while Amare Stoudemire had 23 points and 14 rebounds as the Suns remained the only team in the NBA without a home loss.

Phoenix has won 19 in a row at home dating to last season.

Washington's Gilbert Arenas scored 22 points in 23 minutes but made just 6 of 21 shots.

Jazz 110, Bobcats 102

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Utah bounced back from a miserable loss to defeat New Orleans.

Deron Williams had 23 points and 10 assists, and Carlos Boozer added 22 points and 11 rebounds, after the pair had managed just eight points between them in the big defeat at Atlanta.

Gerald Wallace had 30 points and 13 rebounds for the Bobcats.

Lakers 103, Nets 84

In East Rutherford, New Jersey, Los Angeles comfortably won a meeting of the NBA's best and worst teams.

Kobe Bryant had 29 points and 10 rebounds, while Pau Gasol had 14 of each as Lakers won their third straight game of a road trip.

The Nets dropped their seventh straight, but the game was competitive into the third quarter, when Bryant started taking over about the time the league's lowest-scoring team was enduring one of its usual droughts.

Devin Harris led New Jersey with 21 points.

Spurs 100, Pacers 99

In San Antonio, Tim Duncan's dunk with 4.6 seconds left gave San Antonio victory over Indiana as Spurs coach Gregg Popovich notched his 700th career win.

Duncan's first attempt, with time winding down, was blocked before the Spurs' perennial All-Star grabbed the ball back and rammed in the winning score.

Popovich is the 16th coach in NBA history to reach 700 wins and is among seven active coaches to pass the milestone.

Troy Murphy led the Pacers with 21 points.

Clippers 112, 76ers 107, OT

In Philadelphia, Los Angeles blew a big lead and came within a fraction of a second to losing, before recovering to edge Philadelphia in overtime.

The Clippers' 16-point, third-quarter lead vanished and it appeared they lost but Andre Iguodala's jump shot as time expired was ruled out as he did not get it away in time.

Chris Kaman scored 24 points and Baron Davis added 20 for Los Angeles.

Marreese Speights scored 28 points and Iguodala added 20 for Philadelphia.

The game was played before a sparse crowd of about 2,600 after a winter storm dumped one to two feet of snow in the area.

Knicks say Robinson's agent requested a trade

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Knicks say the agent for Nate Robinson has asked the team to trade the recently benched guard.

A team spokesman says the request was made Saturday and that team president Donnie Walsh will have discussions with Robinson's agent, Aaron Goodwin.

Robinson, a productive backup last season, hasn't played in the last eight games. Knicks coach Mike D'Antoni insists the benching isn't personal, only that he wants to use the players who give the team the best chance to win and that Robinson currently isn't one of them.

D'Antoni grew angry with a series of questions about Robinson's place in the rotation before the Knicks' 95-91 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Friday night.

"We're trying to win," D'Antoni said. "I can't explain exactly every second the ins and outs, and we were on a roll and that roll doesn't quit just because you lose a game. You see over time if this works or not."

A message was left with Goodwin Sports' office seeking comment.

Robinson is averaging only 10.9 points after scoring a career-best 17.2 per game last season. The two-time slam dunk champion re-signed with the Knicks on a one-year deal this summer after generating little interest as a restricted free agent.

Ryder Cup captain Pavin sees strong Woods return

LONDON (AP)—U.S. Ryder Cup captain Corey Pavin says Tiger Woods will be as strong a player as ever when he comes back from his marital turmoil and self-imposed break from golf.

"Tiger's obviously a very strong-minded individual and I don't think he will play any differently when he comes back," Pavin said Friday during a visit to London. "He's come back from injuries and setbacks and done fine."

The Ryder Cup is next Oct. 1-3 at Celtic Manor in Wales. If Woods isn't back to help the Americans defend the title, Pavin said it would weaken the team but won't mean the Americans can't win. Woods missed last year's victory at Valhalla while recovering from knee surgery.

"To not have the best player in the world weakens the team," Pavin said. "That does not mean we can't win without him because obviously we did last time, but you always want the best player in the world."

Pavin said Woods first has to resolve his marital problems.

"My main concern is for his family. My view of him as a golfer is not going to change at all and my view of him as a human being is not going to change either," Pavin said. "Everybody makes mistakes. I'm not going to sit here in judgment.

"I just hope things work out for him and Elin. It's obviously an emotional time for him, but I think he's going to be fine."

Meanwhile, former British Open and PGA champion Padraig Harrington said he was "amazed" by Woods' admission of infidelity. Harrington said he regularly stayed in the same hotels as Woods while at tournaments and felt sorry for him because he believed he led a quiet life.

"Most of us would go out to dinner at tournaments but Tiger couldn't go out," the Irishman told Friday's editions of the Irish Independent. "Living in a goldfish bowl, there was so little he could do and I kind of felt sorry for him in that sense."

Tag Heuer to drop Tiger Woods from US campaigns

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Swiss watch maker Tag Heuer said Friday that it will "downscale" its use of golfer Tiger Woods' image in its advertising campaigns for the foreseeable future.

The company said it will continue its relationship with Woods but is modifying its marketing programs in certain regions out of respect for his request for privacy.

How long the change last will depend on Woods' decision about returning to professional golf, the company said. Woods has been a pitchman for Tag Heuer since 2002.

The company said it will continue to support Woods' charitable foundation, which is based in Irvine, Calif.

After initially standing by Woods, the company moderated its support Monday by saying it would assess its relationship with the world's highest-earning athlete.

The Swiss company, a unit of luxury goods empire LVMH Moet Hennessy Louis Vuitton, is at least the third sponsor to back away from Woods since his admission of extramarital "transgressions."

Consulting firm Accenture dropped the athlete Sunday, saying he was "no longer the right representative" of the company's values. Gillette, a unit of the Procter & Gamble Co., said over the weekend that it won't air ads for its razors that include Woods or include him in public appearances. AT&T said it is evaluating its relationship with the golf superstar.

Woods has taken an indefinite leave from golf to work on repairing his marriage after numerous allegations of infidelities that surfaced following a November car crash near his Florida home.

Tag Heuer did not specify in which markets it was curtailing use of Woods' image.

Pacquiao belts out tunes in birthday bash

BOXING

GENERAL SANTOS CITY, Philippines—Filipino boxing hero Manny Pacquiao has celebrated his birthday in lavish style, belting out a series of songs in front of thousands of guests, roasting pigs and raffling a car.

About 3,000 people, including some of the nation's most powerful politicians, attended Pacquiao's 31st birthday bash on Thursday at a convention center in his home town of General Santos.

The boxer, who last month won a historic seventh world title, performed 15 songs including a duet with his wife, Jinkee, at the party where 30 roasted pigs were served and a car was raffled off.

"I thank you for coming and I thank God because he is the one who gave me all my blessings and my skills for my achievements," Pacquiao, dressed in white and black, told the crowd.

Pacquiao's mother, Dionisia Pacquiao, joined the celebration, entertaining the crowd with dance numbers, but she said her most fervent wish was for her son to finally quit boxing.

"He has everything in life, plus a perfect family. My wish for him is to let go of fighting Mayweather. I am afraid of what might happen," she said.

She was referring to the fight between Pacquiao and American Floyd Mayweather Jr. to take place in March next year.

Pacquiao is widely regarded as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, a reputation Mayweather once enjoyed, and the fight could turn out to be boxing's richest bout.

After the party, Pacquiao returned to his mansion and took his oath as a member of Senator Manny Villar's Nacionalista Party.

Villar is running for president in the May elections, and Pacquiao is hoping to win a seat in the House of Representatives after failing at his first attempt two years ago.

Aside from being a boxer and an aspiring politician, Pacquiao acts on TV shows and has recorded his own album. ***(PDI)***

RUSSIANS

From Page 28

Castro nailing a win via tap-out over Fasi "Quickdraw" Jesse. Castro took the victory midway in the first of the five-minute round when he held Jesse to the canvas and put a locked on the Saipan' fighters arms.

Earlier in the Castro-Jesse bout, the former connected on a punch, causing a cut below the right eye of the latter. It was Jesse's first loss in seven fights, while Castro improved his record to 6-7.

The first offering in the triple-treat main event featuring Russia's Ilya Zelik and Trench Tech's Tetsuji Kato of Japan was well applauded until a referee stoppage midway in the second round had spectators booing referee Tony D'Angelo.

Angelo stopped the fight at the 2:11 mark of the second round and declared Kato the winner when Zelik failed to get out of his position. Kato was on top of Zelik, who was covering his head from the former's punches. D'Angelo, through ring announcer L.J. Castro, explained he stopped the fight, as he had already counted Kato making more than 30 uncontested punches, while the Russian fighter was doing nothing.

D'Angelo even called the attention of Zelik's cornerman and said he will stop the fight if the Russian fighter will not make a move. However, the cornerman just gave D'Angelo a puzzled look. When D'Angelo stopped the fight, Zelik went up, thinking the bout will still continue. However, to his and the fans surprise, D'Angelo called off the match and awarded the win to Kato.

Earlier in the first round, Kato and Zelik threw punches to each other, making the bout almost even. Kato sustained cuts below and above his left eye with the first cut cause by a foul kick from Zelik and the second off a clear punch from the Russian fighter.

Zelik's loss foiled Russia's 3-0 bid on its Trech Wars debut.

Earlier, Iliev Ismail and Bashir Jamlihanov gave Russia a 2-0 record in Redemption when they bounced back from a lousy first round to win in the second round.

Ismail was pitted against Guam's Hosea "Killa B" Ware in the 185-lbs bout and the former unleashed killer punches early to dominate the fight.

Ware cornered Ismail, had the Russian fighter's back against the wall and released a flurry of strong punches. A bloody Ismail walked back to his corner after impressively surviving Ware's beating in the first round.

Then came payback time in the second round when Ismail did not allow Ware to take him to the canvas and instead exchanged the Guam fighter to a fistfight. It was Ismail's turn to connect on killer punches to the face of Ware, who tried to trick the Russian by frequently laying on the canvas.

Ismail did not bite on Ware's bait and waited for the Guam fighter to stand up. When Ware did, Ismail's fists were ready for more punishment. Finally, D'Angelo had seen enough and stopped the fight, awarding a TKO win to Ismail at the 2:39 mark of the second round.

Another bloody bout followed with Saipan's Charleston "The Predator" Aiken challenging Russia's Jamlihanov.

It was a give-and-take bout in the first round with blood flowing from both fighters' mouth and nose. Jamlihanov was ready to go for a kill in the closing seconds of the first round when he cornered Aiken, but fortunately the bell sounded, giving the latter a break.

However, luck was no longer on Aiken's side in the second round, as Jamlihanov continued to pound him with strong punches to the face and the body. At the 4:35 mark, guest referee Frank "The Crank" Camacho stopped the fight, awarding a TKO win to the Russian fighter.

G-STARS

From Page 28

10 points in the first half to lift 670 Rollers to a 33-28 halftime lead. Maratita picked up where Palacios left off in the second half, notching 10 markers.

The other semis pairing will have the San Antonio Sixers meeting the Chalan Kanoa Saints.

The Saints stunned third-ranked Sonics in the playoffs, 61-53, after drawing double figures from three players.

Zack Tudela led all scorers with his 18 points, while teammates Leo Galarse and Ben Iglecias chipped in 14 and 12, respectively.

Galarse fired 11 of his total points in the first half, including eight straight markers, putting the Saints in the lead at the break, 26-19. Tudela took over in the second half, drilling 13 points.

In the second playoff game, the Sixers ousted the Runnin' Rebels, 57-50.

Matt Duenas top-scored for the Sixers with 22 points, while Joe Ada and Ian Benavente also finished in double figures with 14 and 10 points, respectively.

First Game

G-Stars 46 – Rabauliman 16, Kenty 9, N. Mateo 8, Salas 4, Concepcion 4, E. Manalili 2, D. Mateo 2.

Ol'Aces 44 – Ogumoro 12, Tomokane 11, Guerrero 8, Taylor 5, D. Dillay 4, De Leon 4.

Scoring by halves: 22-20, 46-44.

Second Game

Sixers 57 – M. Duenas 22, Ada 14, Benavente 10, Flores 6, E. Duenas 5.

Rebels 50 – Kiyoshi 18, Iguel 16, Aughenbaugh 5, Ichihara 4, Rangamar 4.

Scoring by halves: 25-25, 57-50.

Third Game

Saints 61 – Tudela 18, Galarse 14, Iglecias 12, Aulerio 6, Torres 6, Reyes 2, Pangelinan 2.

Sonics 53 – Ajoste 17, Cadiang 10, Jeon D.M. 9, Ecalnea 7, Palacios 5, Sola 2, D. W. Jeon 1.

Scoring by halves: 26-19, 61-53.

Fourth Game

670 Rollers 59 – Palacios 15, Maratita 15, Ogo 7, Guerrero 6, Lisua 6, Brel 6, Danas 4.

Sparks 51 – Hossain 21, E. Manglona 14, Norita 6, Mettao 4, Faisao 2, R. Babauta 2.

Scoring by halves: 33-28, 59-51.

HOLIDAY

From Page 28

Get It, Got It, Good finished only third in the elimination round, but was the first one to make it to the finals after beating the second-ranked Tinian, 25-21, 25-19 and the top-seeded No Fear, 25-22, 25-16.

No Fear was waiting for the results of the Tinian vs. Islanders playoff game for the former's second attempt at the finals seat. Results of these matches were unavailable as of press time.

In the women's division, making it to the playoff round were Tinian, Platinum Slammers, Silly Girls and Ha. The top-seeded Tinian drew first blood in yesterday's playoffs after downing Ha in straight sets, 25-16, 25-21. Platinum Slammers and Silly Girls were squaring off in the other first round playoff match as of press time. Tinian was scheduled to face the winner of the Platinum Slammers-Silly Girls tiff with the victory advancing to the finals and having a twice-to-beat advantage in the championship round.

The three other teams that competed in the women's division were the MHS Dolphins, Hopwood Hilitais, and Pikan Gaga. In the men's division, completing the seven-team cast were Naw Mean, Hopwood Hilitais, and Kagman High School.

The weekend indoor volleyball tournament was supported by SEDAC, Jim Gebart, Freddy Salavaria, and Hard Rock Café.

LOCAL

From Page 28

and admission to the banquet after the tournament. Check-in time for the fundraiser is at 6am, while tee-off is set 7am.

SLLB will open its 2010 season on Feb. 13 and will hold competitions in four divisions, namely the Majors, Juniors, Seniors, and Big League. Games in the Majors will take place at the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield, while matches in the three other divisions will be played at the bigger Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield.

Squads interested in competing in next year's SLLB must pay the $500 entrance fee and submit a copy of roster and players' health insurance on or before Jan. 13, 2010.

The Patriots notched both the pennant and the championship in last season's Junior League after cruising to an 8-4 title win over Ol'Aces in the finals. The Fielders gained the Senior League championship after shutting out Kagman Lion Kings, 10-0.

In the Big League, the Falcons' Ben Cabrera connected on walk-off single to lead his team to a 6-5 victory over the Fielders in the finals.

Ol'Aces are next season's defending champion in the Majors, as they defeated the San Antonio Dragons, 6-5 in the finals early this year with Virolanson Secharmidal also scoring a walk-off single.

For more information about SLLB and its fundraiser, contact Rogolifoi at 288-3515, Walter Macaranas at 483-9258, or Manny Tenorio at 323-3866. ***(Roselyn B. Monroyo)***

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	20	5	.800	–
Toronto	12	17	.414	10
New York	9	17	.346	11 1/2
Philadelphia	7	20	.259	14
New Jersey	2	26	.071	19 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	20	7	.741	–
Atlanta	19	7	.731	1/2
Miami	13	11	.542	5 1/2
Charlotte	10	15	.400	9
Washington	8	17	.320	11

Central Division

Cleveland	20	7	.741	–
Milwaukee	11	14	.440	8
Detroit	11	15	.423	8 1/2
Chicago	10	15	.400	9
Indiana	9	16	.360	10

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	19	8	.704	–
Houston	16	11	.593	3
San Antonio	14	10	.583	3 1/2
New Orleans	12	13	.480	6
Memphis	11	15	.423	7 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	19	8	.704	–
Utah	16	11	.593	3
Portland	16	12	.571	3 1/2
Oklahoma City	13	13	.500	5 1/2
Minnesota	5	22	.185	14

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	21	4	.840	–
Phoenix	18	9	.667	4
L.A. Clippers	12	14	.462	9 1/2
Sacramento	12	14	.462	9 1/2
Golden State	7	19	.269	14 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Orlando 92, Portland 83
Utah 110, Charlotte 102
L.A. Clippers 112, Philadelphia 107, OT
L.A. Lakers 103, New Jersey 84
Chicago 101, Atlanta 98, OT
Sacramento 96, Milwaukee 95
Houston 95, Oklahoma City 90
San Antonio 100, Indiana 99
Phoenix 121, Washington 95

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	26	274	226	797	30.7
James, CLE	26	261	186	751	28.9
Bryant, LAL	24	258	154	693	28.9
Durant, OKC	24	224	189	667	27.8
Nowitzki, DAL	26	249	182	700	26.9
Wade, MIA	24	213	191	638	26.6
Ellis, GOL	25	240	116	611	24.4
Granger, IND	17	130	102	414	24.4
Bosh, TOR	28	229	209	673	24.0
Roy, POR	27	202	144	582	21.6
Johnson, ATL	24	198	80	508	21.2
Arenas, WAS	23	168	108	484	21.0
Gay, MEM	24	189	104	502	20.9
Jennings, MIL	23	177	70	475	20.7
Williams, UTA	23	173	94	469	20.4
Boozer, UTA	25	206	96	508	20.3
Evans, SAC	23	171	113	466	20.3
Duncan, SAN	21	170	82	422	20.1
Stoudemire, PHX	26	195	126	516	19.8
Lopez, NJN	26	188	137	513	19.7

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	113	174	.649
Howard, ORL	152	239	.636
Gasol, MEM	135	218	.619
Hilario, DEN	130	225	.578
Bynum, LAL	147	256	.574
Landry, HOU	153	267	.573
Horford, ATL	133	233	.571
Garnett, BOS	156	274	.569
Lee, NYK	181	321	.564
O'Neal, MIA	122	217	.562

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	26	100	232	332	12.8
Wallace, CHA	24	55	234	289	12.0
Noah, CHI	24	101	187	288	12.0
Bosh, TOR	28	97	220	317	11.3
Camby, LAC	24	72	198	270	11.3
Boozer, UTA	25	51	225	276	11.0
Haywood, WAS	23	106	144	250	10.9
Duncan, SAN	21	64	158	222	10.6
Lee, NYK	25	56	195	251	10.0
Randolph, MEM	25	112	138	250	10.0

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	26	293	11.3
Paul, NOR	16	174	10.9
Williams, UTA	23	240	10.4
Rondo, BOS	24	227	9.5
Kidd, DAL	26	237	9.1
James, CLE	26	207	8.0
B. Davis, LAC	24	179	7.5
Arenas, WAS	23	158	6.9
Westbrook, OKC	24	160	6.7
Duhon, NYK	25	157	6.3

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	8	5	0	.615	348	234
Miami	7	6	0	.538	292	306
N.Y. Jets	7	6	0	.538	275	211
Buffalo	5	8	0	.385	215	271

South

x-Indianapolis	14	0	0	1.000	394	248
Jacksonville	7	7	0	.500	266	322
Tennessee	6	7	0	.462	293	323
Houston	6	7	0	.462	311	273

North

Cincinnati	9	4	0	.692	264	217
Baltimore	7	6	0	.538	319	218
Pittsburgh	6	7	0	.462	278	244
Cleveland	2	11	0	.154	158	315

West

San Diego	10	3	0	.769	362	259
Denver	8	5	0	.615	256	230
Oakland	4	9	0	.308	155	316
Kansas City	3	10	0	.231	206	342

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	372	273
Dallas	9	5	0	.643	320	250
N.Y. Giants	7	6	0	.538	341	330
Washington	4	9	0	.308	234	251

South

x-New Orleans	13	1	0	.929	483	298
Atlanta	6	7	0	.462	302	305
Carolina	5	8	0	.385	225	282
Tampa Bay	1	12	0	.077	190	356

North

y-Minnesota	11	2	0	.846	389	243
Green Bay	9	4	0	.692	344	243
Chicago	5	8	0	.385	247	291
Detroit	2	11	0	.154	209	406

West

Arizona	8	5	0	.615	306	258
San Francisco	6	7	0	.462	269	242
Seattle	5	8	0	.385	250	301
St. Louis	1	12	0	.077	146	361

x-clinched division
y-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Games

Dallas 24, New Orleans 17

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Week in Sports

More champions crowned

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The week of the champions was extended for another week with MP United, Kagman High School, Vince Deleon Guerrero Rosario, and the pair of Heather Kennedy and Randy Steele joining teams which had earlier made it to the champions' list.

MP United pulled off a 2-1 title win over Inter-Godfather's in the 2009 NMIFA Men's Year-end Football Tournament at the Oleai Sports Complex field.

CNMI National player Nick Swaim scored twin goals, lifting MP United to the championship victory. Swaim tallied his first goal on a penalty kick in the 46th minute to tie the game and made the second one in the 77th minute against a phalanx of Inter Godfather's defenders.

MP United was awarded a championship trophy after the title match with team captain Tiger Lee receiving the hardware from Northern Mariana Islands Football Association president Jerry Tan. Lee later shared the trophy with Bradley and Richard Brostrom, Joe Miller, Kirk Schuler, Dae Min and Dae Won Jeon, goalie Mafijul Islam, Hong Moon Bin, Adam Hardwicke, Lim Jae Hyuck, Yukiomo Adachi, Joel Jimenez, and Peter Bonser.

A day before MP United reigned supreme in the men's league, the tandem of Kennedy and Steele bested 15 others teams in the playoffs of the 3rd Annual Reverse Co-ed Grass Volleyball Tournament at Navy Hill's baseball field.

Steele and Kennedy were undefeated in the playoffs en route to notching the championship and the $200 purse in the weekend tournament. The winning pair topped Quincy Johnson and Emily Matson in the finals, 17-15.

Rosario prevailed over 11 SGA monthly Ace winners to hoist the Ace of the Aces trophy.

KHS' Lady Ayuyus were the last team to make it to the champion's circle, ruling the girls varsity division of the 2009 MISO High Schools Basketball League.

The Lady Ayuyus downed Marianas High School in the finals, 42-37, to nail their fourth straight championships. Two baskets from Dion Diaz and a free throw from Stacie Mizutani in the last 1:30 of the fourth period ensured the Lady Ayuyus a successful title defense and handed the Dolphins another bridesmaid finish.

Still in basketball, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs is a step away from joining the champions' group after gaining the first finals seat in the 2009 IT&E Inter-Government/Business Basketball League.

DCCA advanced to the championship match after beating defending champion IT&E, 82-72. IT&E dropped to the loser's bracket and will still need to wait for the winner of the Hyatt Regency Saipan-Tinian tiff before having another crack at a final seat.

Over at the JP Centre Basketball Court, Ebisuya clinched the pennant in the masters division of the PILCOWA caging after slipping past rival University of Loyola, 83-80.

In the UBA caging over at the Garapan Basketball Court, Advance X-Terminators won the battle of undefeated teams thumping Prospects, 84-78. The victory was Advance's third in as many games putting the X-Terminators in solo lead of the standings in the 10-team league. Prospects absorbed its first loss in three matches.

Besides crowning of the champions, last week's headlines also featured two sports officials bidding their beloved teams/sport goodbye.

Dr. Kurt Barnes stepped down as president of Northern Marianas Athletics and is leaving NMA to younger hands after 35 years of getting involved in athletics and other sports.

Next to leave was Sugao Kambe, who returned to Japan after serving as coach and technical director of the Northern Mariana Islands Football Association.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
MP United players flash the No. 1 sign after ruling the NMIFA men's league.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
SGA Ace of the Aces Vince DLG Rosario, third left, is joined by, from left, 2008 winner Joe Demapan, 2009 first-placer Larry Deleon Guerrero, and SGA president Ben Aldan.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Coach Sugao Kambe, center, seen here with Patty Coleman, left, and Brenda Schultz, returned to Japan on Saturday after a one-year stint with NMIFA.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Heather Kennedy goes for a dig in the net during her and teammate Randy Steele's game against Nicole LeBlanc and Greg Elliot in the grass volleyball tournament at Navy Hill's field.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
DCCA's Pon Rasa pulls up for a shot against IT&E's Bruce Berline during their playoff game in the government/business caging.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Advance X-Terminators' Kelvin Fitial grabs the rebound during their game against Prospects in the PILCOWA caging last week.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Kagman High School's Mercedes Mesa cuts the net after winning the girls varsity championships of the MISO caging.

Saints lose for first time, beaten by Dallas

Tony Romo and DeMarcus Ware helped Dallas end its December doldrums and the Cowboys held off a frenzied rally by the Saints for a 24-17 victory Saturday night. 24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

More champions crowned

The week of the champions was extended for another week with MP United, Kagman High School, Vince Deleon Guerrero Rosario, and the pair of Heather Kennedy and Randy Steele joining teams which had earlier made it to the champions' list. 27

Russians steal show in Redemption

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

First of a two-part series

Jason "Rush" Tarkong made up for his two-year absence, while Russian fighters put on a show in Friday's Trench Wars 11: Redemption held at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

TRENCH TECH

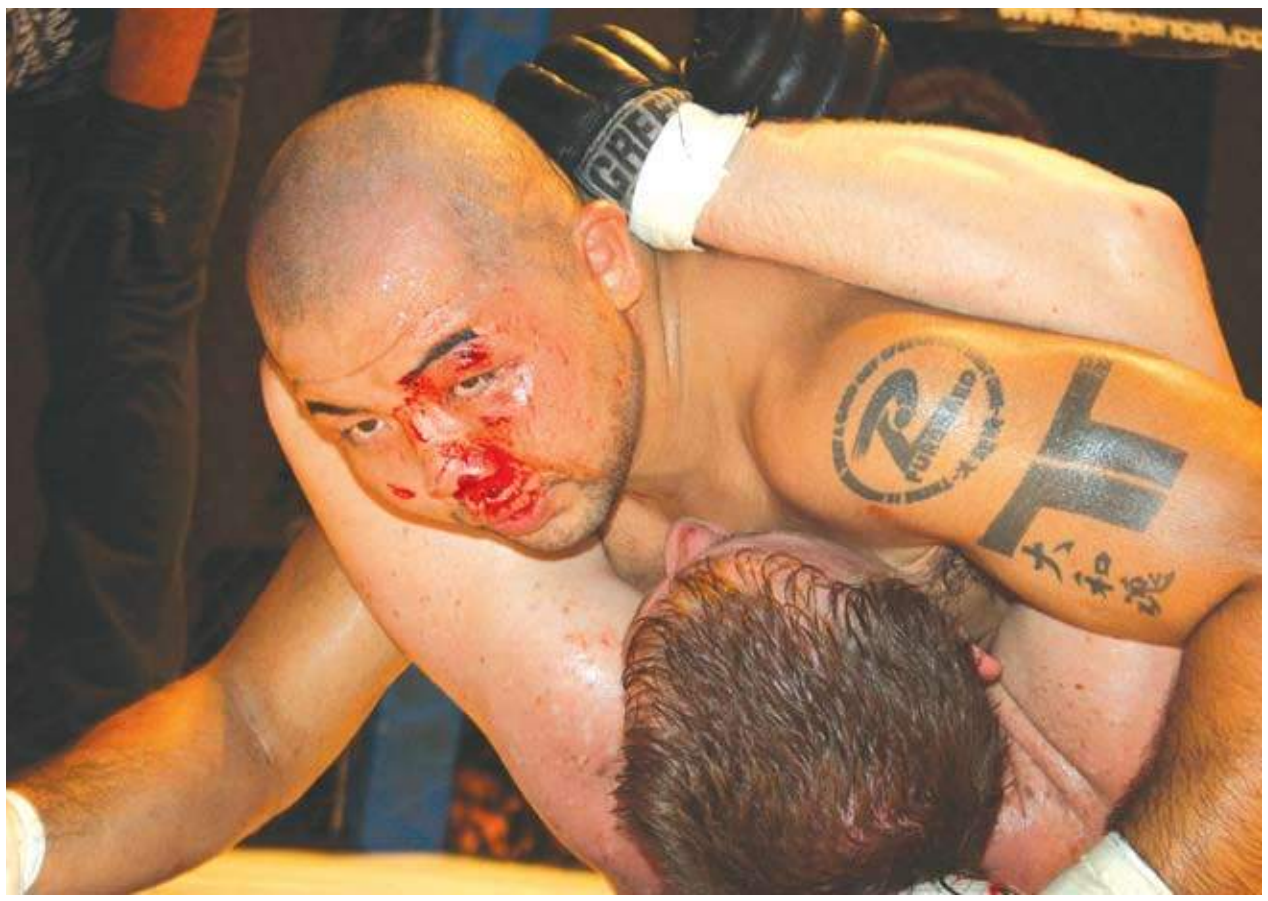
Tarkong tied the quickest win in the weekend bout, stopping Guam's Gil "The Guamaniac" Meno at the 1:30 mark of the first round of their main event fight via submission choke.

After a few exchanges of punches, Tarkong cornered Meno and forced him to submission, giving the CNMI police officer a victory in his comeback on the octagon cage.

The Tarkong-Meno bout in the 170-lb. weight division was the last of the three main fights featured in Redemption.

The second one had Guam's Alex

See RUSSIANS on Page 26



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Blood falls from Tetsuji Kato's face, while he tries to pin down Russia's Ilya Zelik during their bout in Friday's Trench Wars 11: Redemption held at the Royal Taga Hall of Saipan World Resort.

Local golfers urged to join SLLB fundraiser

Saipan Little League Baseball, Inc. president Tony Rogolifoi is calling on fellow golfers to participate in the SLLB fundraising golf tournament set at the west course of the Laolao Bay Golf Resort on Jan. 30.

Rogolifoi

Rogolifoi said proceeds from the tournament will benefit youth sluggers under the SLLB program. He added monies to be earned will be used for the operational cost of the 2010 season of the league.

The one-day tournament has a double-peoria format and entrance fee is $95, inclusive of greens free

See LOCAL on Page 26

G-Stars lead semis cast in Rotary

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The G-Stars advanced to the semifinals of the 2009 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League after surviving Ol'Aces, while three others also made it to the Final Four after Friday's matches at Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The G-Stars escaped past the Ol'Aces, 45-43, with Marvin Rabauliman making the game-winning basket. Rabauliman scored the G-Stars' last four points, including a layup in the remaining three seconds of the match. He paced the G-Stars with 16 points.

The last-seeded Ol'Aces kept the G-Stars' in striking distance from start to finish, but failed to neutralize Rabauliman in the end.

Trevor Ogumoro's 3-pointers helped the Ol'Aces stay in the game, as he canned two triples in the first half, which ended with the G-Stars ahead by only a deuce, 22-20.

However, Ogumoro was held to a triple in the second half, while Rabauliman poured 10 points, including the G-Stars' last two baskets to pull off a close win and move his team to the semifinals.

The G-Stars' semis foe is the 670 Rollers, who downed the Kagman Sparks, 59-51.

Jason Palacios and John Maratita led 670 Rollers' playoff win, firing 15 points apiece.

Palacios drilled two triples and scored

See G-STARS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The G-Stars' Joseph Jung pulls up for a jumper against Ol'Aces' Wes Tomokane during their playoff game in the Rotary caging on Friday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.

Holiday indoor v'ball draws 14 teams

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The 2009 Christmas Drug Free Volleyball Tournament played over the weekend at the Marianas High School Gymnasium lured 14 teams.

Jonas Barcinas, president of the organizing Island Volleyball Club, said it was a good turnout, as the men's and women's divisions drew seven teams each.

Of the seven squads that played in a round-robin format, only four teams were left standing and were playing in a double-elimination playoffs yesterday. They were No Fear, Get It, Got It, Good, Tinian, and Islanders in the men's division.

See HOLIDAY on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

The Islanders' Freddie Pelisamen, right, and a Tinian blocker battle on the net during their playoff game in the 2009 Christmas Drug Free Volleyball Tournament yesterday at the Marianas High School Gymnasium.